The Last Full Measure

Honoré W. Morrow

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THE LAST FULL MEASURE

BOOKS BY
HONORÉ WILLSIE MORROW

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STILL JIM
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THE ENCHANTED CANYON
JUDITH OF THE GODLESS VALLEY
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WITH MALICE TOWARD NONE
SPLENDOR OF GOD
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THE LOST SPEECH
of Abraham Lincoln

Biography

THE FATHER OF LITTLE WOMEN
(Little, Brown & Co.)
MARY TODD LINCOLN
TIGER! TIGER!

For Boys

ON TO OREGON!

THE LAST FULL MEASURE

BY

HONORÉ W. MORROW

1930

NEW YORK

WILLIAM MORROW & COMPANY

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PRINTED IN THE U. S. A. BY
QUINN & BODEN COMPANY, INC.
RAHWAY, N. J.

"It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to the cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion."

—*From Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.*

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	SEPTEMBER, 1864	1
II	ESCAPE	11
III	MUDDLEHEAD	25
IV	LINCOLN'S FRIEND	37
V	JOHN SURRATT	55
VI	"PERCHANCE TO DREAM"	62
VII	SPREAD OUT!	75
VIII	THE SAD LITTLE SONG	90
IX	EVIL FANTASIES	99
X	ANNA DICKINSON	114
XI	CHARITY FOR ALL	125
XII	O MISTRESS MINE!	137
XIII	FONDLY DO WE HOPE	152
XIV	STANTON, THE LOVER	162
XV	THE ELEVENTH OF APRIL	172
XVI	IN GLADNESS OF HEART	186
XVII	NEITHER LET IT BE AFRAID	198
XVIII	APRIL TWELFTH	204
XIX	FOR OFFENSES MUST COME	214
XX	"FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES"	225
XXI	APRIL THIRTEENTH	236
XXII	"O MONSTROUS FAULT!"	249
XXIII	"FOR THOU DIDST CALL ME!"	260

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXIV	APRIL FOURTEENTH	272
XXV	"LET DOWN THE BARS"	283
XXVI	"THEY PRAY TO THE SELFSAME GOD" .	295
XXVII	BRETHREN AND LOVERS	307
XXVIII	FATE	318
XXIX	"THE LAST FULL MEASURE OF DEVOTION"	330
	PARTIAL LIST OF BOOKS READ . . .	338
	AUTHOR'S NOTE	339

THE LAST FULL MEASURE

CHAPTER I

SEPTEMBER, 1864

IT was a lovely day, though cool for September in Baltimore. It was a day on which one might well grudge a moment spent indoors. Yet three young men remained crouched over a table in the all but deserted bar-room of Barnum's Hotel for a long two hours of that ambrosial afternoon, talking in low voices and drinking rum. They drank a considerable amount in the course of the conversation but this did not account fully for the excitement shining in their eyes.

They were old schoolmates. Yet save for the liquor they were consuming their meeting had no aspect of a class reunion.

The delicate-looking one of the trio was Sam Arnold. He had served in the Confederate army but had spent a long time in hospital, had grown weary of the war and was living with his parents in Baltimore. His face was intelligent with steady black eyes, full, well-shaped lips and thick black hair. A dark mustache and close-trimmed beard made him look older than his twenty-eight years.

The smallest of the three men was Mike O'Laughlin. He too had served in the Confederate army but the year before he had taken the oath of allegiance to the Union. He now worked in his brother's feed store in Baltimore. Mike was dark, with irregular features, large brown eyes that did not hold one's gaze and lips inclined to twitch behind the small mustache and fashionable imperial. He also was twenty-eight.

The most talkative of the group was the man who drank the most. He sat taller in his chair than Arnold and where both the others were of an ordinary comeliness, he was extraordinarily and luminously handsome. His face, smooth shaven save for a black mustache, was perfect in its contours. His great black eyes were of a haunting beauty and as he talked, a thousand varied expressions flashed in these and in his voice and on his lips. He was twenty-six years old. His name was John Wilkes Booth.

It had been noon when they had seated themselves in the deserted bar-room, and conversation had been difficult for the town was rocking with the salute of a hundred guns President Lincoln had ordered in honor of General Sherman's march through Georgia. Sherman had just taken Atlanta. The three young men had accompanied the booming of the cannon with curses for Lincoln and his generals—large and not unobscene oaths which left no doubt of their political convictions. When the salute was over however they brought their respective histories up to date.

Sam Arnold couldn't get a job and was keeping soul and body together by working on his brother's farm. Michael O'Laughlin was discontented. There was no future for him in his brother's store. Mike needed capital.

But Wilkes Booth was already famous in the acting profession. Women mobbed him at the stage door and young college men kept the programs of his plays tacked to the walls of their rooms and, he said, tried to imitate the inimitable toss of his head, his graceful gasconading stride, his delightful smile. Wilkes' mother had extracted a promise from him which he explained to his two friends.

"No, I haven't been able to shoulder a gun for Maryland, poor dishonored beauty! All my people are staunch

supporters of the Union, I'm sorry to say. And my mother made me promise—when I thought it was only a matter of sixty days before Secession won—made me promise not to fight against the Union. God, how I've regretted that promise! But, out of that sacrifice has come a great good, dear old friends! Sweating to find how I could do my share has led me to the discovery of how to end this war at once, with victory for the Confederacy."

Sam Arnold stared.

Mike O'Laughlin laughed. "You still do fancy yourself, Booth!"

Wilkes flushed and his eyes flashed. "I'll thank you both to listen to me with civility! You're dull if you don't realize that if the South's beaten, it means either extermination or exile for every Southern gentleman. That shall not be while I live!" He sprang to his feet and took a stride or two up and down the room, dodging chairs and now and then making an imaginary sword thrust, left palm in the air.

The others exchanged amused glances! The same old Wilkes, living in bravado! But he was always interesting and they waited, with outward respect at least, for him to explain himself. He returned presently, dropping into his chair with graceful abandon. He took a stout drink of brandy and then leaned toward them and began a tirade that wiped all interest from the two faces opposite.

"Four years ago I'd have given my life to keep the Union as I'd always known her. If one could just wake up as from an unspeakable nightmare and know that the fearful scenes never had been enacted! How we'd bless God! That's true, isn't it, old schoolmates?" He leaned toward them with a smile of infinite sweetness.

His listeners nodded languidly.

"I've studied hard," he went on, "to find on what grounds the right of a State to secede can be denied. But I can find none. The North is wrong, wrong, wrong! And I love justice and right more than I love a country that disavows both."

"Oh, come, Wilkes," protested Sam Arnold, "we've heard this sort of gab a hundred times a week since we could remember anything. Save it for Richmond. You say you're going down there."

Wilkes bit his lip but controlled his quick resentment to urge, "Please don't interrupt! What I've got to say is important. Heaven knows, no one is more willing to help the negroes than I am. But Lincoln's policy is only preparing the way for their total annihilation. And if Lincoln wins in the November election, Southern chivalry will be annihilated too. He's a curse to the world!— And yet, how I've loved that old Union flag will never be known! A few years ago, no country in the world could boast one so spotless and pure. Oh, how I've longed to see her break from the mist of blood and death that circles round her folds, spoiling her beauty and tarnishing—"

O'Laughlin slumped dramatically in his chair and Arnold groaned.

"I will be heard!" shouted Wilkes Booth, bringing a surprisingly large fist down on the table. Then his voice softened. "Old friends, I've found a way, a simple, bloodless way to end this anarchy of death."

"So you say!" grinned O'Laughlin. "The insane asylums are full of fellows who think they're God."

Booth set his teeth and taking out his pocketbook, laid a twenty-dollar gold piece on the red enameled tray which held the bottles. "I remember your characteristics, Mike," he snarled. "Let me purchase your attention."

"Good boy! I'm all ears," chuckled O'Laughlin, but

he did not pick up the gold piece, though he drew the tray to his side of the table. Arnold made a playful grab at the coin. O'Laughlin ostentatiously imprisoned his hand.

Wilkes began again, with increased earnestness. "To show you how serious I am let me say that in order to carry out this plan I shall have to give up my profession which earns me twenty thousand dollars a year. I must give up my mother and my brothers and sisters, all very dear to me though they differ so widely from me politically. I must give them all up, though to do so seems insane. But God is my judge."

He had caught their attention at last. He gazed from one to the other for a long moment, took another drink and then whispered, slowly, "Sam and Mike, I am going to kidnap old Lincoln and carry him to Richmond. There I shall turn him over to the Confederate authorities to hold till the North lays down its arms."

"Great God!" gasped Sam Arnold, half in fear and half in admiration.

"I've heard that dream from many another fool," grunted O'Laughlin. "Take back your gold, friend Wilkes!"

"You sneering jackass!" furiously from Booth.

Sam rose, pulling down his purple vest and picking up his little round felt hat.

"Don't go, Sam!" pleaded Wilkes, instantly. "It's really a great scheme."

"And the drinks are free!" exclaimed Mike O'Laughlin, refilling his glass.

"Such being the case—!" Sam dropped into his chair. "But you really have no outer skin, Wilkes. You must be the devil to act with."

"On the contrary, every one loves me," returned Booth, coolly. "But I'll admit that I've brooded over this idea

until my nerves are set on hair triggers. I've just completed the details and you are the first human beings to whom I've breathed a syllable. You see how I trust you! I need help. Loyal help. And I'm going to begin by sharing more than my secrets with you." He placed another twenty-dollar gold piece on the tray.

Arnold did not touch the coins but O'Laughlin dropped one in his vest pocket.

"What are the details, Wilkes?" he asked.

"Some evening when I'm playing on the stage and old Abe's alone with a single companion in the President's box, you two will be hidden in the passage behind the box. At a cue agreed upon, the lights will be turned out, and you two will enter the box and knock out Abe and his companion with a blow from a black-jack. Then like lightning I will clamber into the box from the stage. We will tie up both men and leaving the companion to his fate, we will lower Abe to the stage and rush him to the rear of the theater. In the alley I'll have a suitable carriage and horses. We'll drive through Washington, across the unguarded bridge over the Eastern Branch and down lower Maryland to Port Tobacco. There a boat will be in waiting and we'll ferry him over the Potomac. After that it will be simple enough to get him into Richmond." He paused to observe the effect of this statement on his friends.

Sam was motionless. But Mike smoothed his little imperial, took the gold piece from his pocket, kissed it and shoved it toward Booth. The actor scowled.

"Be patient, Mike," he urged. "There is more to this than a personal whim. Last April President Davis appointed four commissioners to live in Canada for the purpose of coöperating with the Northern peace party. Nobody on either side can deny that that is a laudable purpose, eh? They have quite a perfect system of com-

munication between Montreal and Richmond, sending a messenger back and forth through the lines and using the personal columns of the New York *News,* which reaches Richmond regularly."

"They're the men that worked on Horace Greeley and would have got somewhere if old Abe hadn't played the tyrant. We know all about them," said Arnold, impatiently.

"Well, did you know this?" demanded Wilkes. "That through Vallandigham of Ohio and other northern friends of Secession, they've got innumerable groups within the secret organizations of the Knights of the Golden Circle and the Sons of Liberty, armed and officered to oppose army drafts and otherwise harass the Federal authorities, so that the morale of the people at home will be broken?"

"Yes, the 'copper-heads,'" grunted Mike. "Tell us something new."

Wilkes moved his shoulders exasperatedly. "I'm merely trying to prove to you that I'm not on a wild-goose chase. Jacob Thompson, one of the commissioners, told me, himself, that there are in New York City alone, 20,000 copper-heads in well-disciplined organizations. He estimates that he has at least 60,000 men scattered over the North who'll go any length for the Confederacy. Thompson was distinguished enough to be Secretary of the Interior under President Buchanan. You certainly ought to believe *him.* If you're not members of some such organization, you ought to be. I mustn't reveal any more to you but I'll add that I'm in possession of the cipher code used by Jacob Thompson in his letters to the Secretary of the Confederate Treasury and by Mr. Davis, too. I've recently had a long interview with Thompson and with C. C. Clay, Jr., another of the commissioners. I dare say no more at the moment.

Now, will you two young nonentities condescend to trust me and listen to my plans about old Abe?"

He had caught their interest at last. Sam Arnold now spoke in his gentle way. "Everybody knows old Abe could be abducted. I've often heard talk of how he could be carried down to Richmond by the route the Confederate Secret Service uses. It could be done, I reckon, if any one wanted to take the risk. The absurd part of your scheme, Wilkes, is the beginning of it. That theatre business—gosh!" He shook his head.

"I agree with Sam!" exclaimed Mike, for once making a direct statement. "That theatrical background is just a method for you to show off, Wilkes. You always were a good fellow as a kid until your love of showing off got the best of you. That characteristic, I suppose, makes a first-class actor of you, but a poor conspirator. I'm all for doing anything to get rid of old Lincoln, short of killing him. He *can* be kidnaped. But you've got to catch the old flea when he's hopping from the White House over to the War Building at midnight. That would be a cinch. Then find an empty house in the neighborhood and carry him there while another group carries an imitation Lincoln off, lickety-cut, in a buggy. At a suitable moment, the old fellow himself could be smuggled across the Potomac. Plenty of loyal Southerners over there to pass him along."

"Yes, that could be done," mused Sam Arnold, twirling his glass with none-too-clean fingers. "Or you could grab him and his wife some day when they're driving out to the Soldiers' Home. But the theater notion's no good. Even at that, I'm not inclined to go in with you. The risk is too great. I'd rather go down and join Uncle Bob Lee's army again."

"Me too," agreed Mike, lighting one of Booth's cigars.

"What if I told you that there was big money in it," whispered Booth, eyes half closed as again he leaned across the table. "Millions of dollars, to be shared by us three and any others whom we may take in. The Confederate government will pay that gladly."

"Prove it," said Mike, laconically.

"I can prove it only if you'll believe what I say," said Wilkes. "Jacob Thompson has deposited in his name in a bank in Montreal, 65 million dollars with a commission from Jefferson Davis to devote that money to furthering the interests of the Confederacy in the North. Thompson told me himself that if he could rid the world of the tyrant Lincoln, he'd consider all his work had been done. Do you need to be taught to put two and two together?"

"Christ!" ejaculated Mike. His flippant manner left him. "Count me in, Wilkes, if you'll give up the theater as the starting point."

"Look here," urged Wilkes, "if we're going to father the stupendous event that ends the war, are we going to do it like thieves? No! Let it be openly, showing the world there's more than one kind of a general."

"There's something in that," said Sam, slowly.

"There is not!" grunted Mike O'Laughlin. "Come, Wilkes, agree you'll try the Soldiers' Home scheme first, the path to the War Office next and the theater only as a last resort and I'll agree."

Wilkes bit his lip and sighed, helplessly. "Well, I'm willing to subordinate my original plan in order to bring in people I know and trust as I do you two. But it's against my better judgment."

"I'll go in with you," drawled Arnold. "I'm dead busted and that gold piece looks good to me."

"I'm with you," said O'Laughlin, "partly because of the money but still more," his face suddenly twisting,

"still more because I'm willing to risk my life to get my hands on the bastard who's made it possible for a nigger to marry my sister."

The three exchanged looks, then Wilkes Booth rose and led the way out to the steps of the hotel. The sun was sinking and there was a locust shrilling in the tulip-tree above their heads. The air was full of the smell of drying foliage.

"I must leave for Montreal, to-night," said Wilkes. "I have a perfectly open reason for going as I'm hoping to play stock up there. I'll see Jacob Thompson and Clay. As soon as I get back, I'll get in touch with you. In the meantime, I'll send you money." He waved a gloved hand toward the southwest. "Well, confusion and damnation to old Abe! I don't think God can be cruel enough to the South to let him be elected for another four years. But we'll get either him or his successor to America's new throne. Fare-thee-well, friends!"

They shook hands and left him.

CHAPTER II

ESCAPE

CONFUSION and damnation!

Abraham Lincoln at the moment Wilkes Booth was bidding his friends good-by, on that exquisite September afternoon, was talking to a committee of Baltimore colored people who had presented him with a Bible. The little group had waited a long time for him and very timidly, in the reception room on the second floor of the White House. They took it for granted that he had put them off because they were negroes and were astounded when he apologized to them.

John Hay, one of the President's secretaries, came for them just as twilight touched the reception room which received none of the afterglow. He was an elegantly habited young man with black eyes, a round face on which three dreadful war years had etched premature lines, though they had left intact the humor on the lips above his dimpled chin.

"The President will receive you now," said John Hay with a casual nod.

They trooped after him in silence.

The President's office was on the South side of the White House, a room perhaps twenty by thirty feet. Its windows looked out across the lawns and shrubbery, across the marshes, across the Potomac to Alexandria and Arlington Heights, crimson now in the dying light. The long cabinet table covered with a red cloth ran down the center of the room. Between the windows was a bureau for state papers. There was a sofa on either

side of the room and on the west side a marble fireplace over which was an engraving of General Jackson. On the mantel was a fine photograph of John Bright which the great Englishman himself had sent to Lincoln. There were several war maps on the east wall. A tall standing desk stood in the southwest corner. On it lay the Bible, Shakespeare's Works, the Statutes of the United States and Whiting's "War Powers."

A long table desk was placed at right angles to the southwest window with a chair before it so situated that its occupant could swing round and easily reach the books lying on the standing desk behind. As the colored men came in, Lincoln rose from this chair and came toward them.

He had grown thin to emaciation in the three and three-quarter years of war, this man who was six feet, four inches tall but in his thinness looked taller. Still, he gave the effect of wiry muscularity, not of attenuation. His loss of flesh became his plain face better than had its former meager fullness. Or was it a plain face? Certainly the bony structure of the head was superb, as were the deep, huge eye-sockets, the wonderful thrust of jaw and chin, so adamantine yet so finely cut. Could a face be plain that carried between and around the eyes and from nostrils to mouth corners those profound grooves which spiritual agony alone could have cut?

"I'm sorry you had such a long wait," he said as he shook hands with his visitors. "If it's any comfort to you, I'll confide to you that the three Senators, two Brigadier-Generals and the Secretary of the Interior who preceded you, had a longer wait! And I've not had my noon meal yet! This, for me?" as the chairman, a very dark man with Caucasian features, placed the huge red plush Bible in his hands.

"Yes, Mr. Lincoln, sir," replied the man. "We

couldn't think of any other present good enough for you-all," and he launched into a little speech of praise and gratitude.

Lincoln laid the book on the Cabinet table and, keeping one hand upon it, took a small paper knife from his pocket and ran it through his hair. The thanks of colored people always moved and embarrassed him more than any other. It was hard when human beings had to thank other human beings for the right to draw a free breath! He was glad when the halting little address ended.

"The occasion is fitting for a lengthy response to you, my friends," said Lincoln, "but I'm not prepared to make one. I would promise to respond in writing had not experience taught me that business will not allow me to do so. I can only say now as I've often before said that it always has been a sentiment with me that mankind should be free. In letters and documents sent from this office, I have expressed myself better than I now can. In regard to this great book I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this book. All things most desirable for man's welfare here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it. To you, I return my most sincere thanks for the very elegant copy of the great book of God which you present."

He bowed gravely and stood with his hand still on the red plush cover while the negroes filed out of the room.

"The carriage is waiting to take you out to the Soldiers' Home, sir," said John Hay.

"I can't leave before midnight, John," protested Lincoln. "Tell those fellows to go get their suppers and not pester me."

"Meaning the cavalry escort, I suppose," grinned John. "I wish Mrs. Lincoln were here at this moment."

"So do I! So do I," murmured the President, turning back to his desk, over which the doorman was lighting a lamp. "Any news from General Sheridan, John?"

"He's still chasing Rebels in the Shenandoah Valley, Mr. President," replied John, cheerfully, as he sorted a new batch of letters at the standing desk.

"Thank you for nothing," grunted Lincoln. "Run over to Stanton before he leaves the War Office and get the last word, like a good fellow! John!" Young Hay paused by the fireplace. "John, I think this was the worst of our four summers here, don't you? That new-fangled device the Rebels have of wire entanglements before their trenches is hellish. Yet Grant throws his men against them as calmly as a woman shakes crumbs into a fireplace. Somehow, those wires haunt me every waking moment. His losses are crucifying. The only bright and cheering note in this week of bad news was brought me to-day by Colonel Baker. I mean the detective, Baker. He swears he's unearthed a plot of Jacob Thompson and his gang in Canada to kidnap Stanton and Seward and me."

John looked steadily at the President. "What's so cheering in the idea of kidnaping you, sir?" he demanded.

"Think of any one's wanting me that much!" chuckled Lincoln. "Anyhow, I don't believe it. But we keep a pretty close eye on those fellows up there."

"It's not a bit funny to the rest of us, Mr. Lincoln!" protested John. "Not to those of us who love you and who know that the fate of the Union rests with you and who know how easily you could be abducted!" He strode angrily out of the room.

"Well," said Lincoln to General Jackson scowling over the mantel, "there wasn't much comfort in John that time, was there!"

He returned to his chair and drew from a drawer a little pile of bristol-board squares. He had found that he could rest these on his crossed knee and write on them with less strain than in the usual posture at his desk. He was preparing a letter of thanks to the hundred-day troops of Ohio. It took him a moment or two to collect his thoughts.

The noise of Pennsylvania Avenue drifted through the window. The remnant of cobblestones on that popular thoroughfare added an irregular cannonading to the rumble of heavy traffic that was not unlike the sound of battle skirmishing. Dust settled on the cardboard. Mosquitoes buzzed—

The prospect of his re-election seemed practically nil. It looked as if the North might turn heavily against him —No use brooding about that—He wrote a sentence, paused and threw down his pencil. Tired—tired—tired! What would he not give to be, say, on a raft on the Sangamon, floating with the current, the smell of ripening paw-paws and of fresh water and of goldenrod making heaven of the soft damp air—

Suddenly he rose and, with an air of combined guilt and cunning decidedly reminiscent of his eleven-year-old son, Taddie, tiptoed across the private passage to the family sitting-room. He crossed this and the adjacent guest-room to Mary's room, and across this to his own chamber. Here he changed to comfortable walking shoes, found his cane and then boldly walked down the private stairs and to the front door. He paused a moment on the steps and wondered if he ought not to change his contemplated run-away into a call on the Secretary of State. Seward was an excellent fellow but still too wordy. That next dispatch to Minister Dayton in Paris about the Mexican situation must be cut to the bone. "Least said soonest mended" was the best rule on earth for the con-

duct of foreign relations. Seward was always skating on the thin ice of conversation. Only the most careful watching thus far had kept him from putting his foot through.

Lincoln wiped his forehead and replaced his soft hat. No, he'd let Seward go, this evening. He started along the bricked path which led west from the portico to the turnstile letting into the War Department grounds. To the south, this walk was bordered by a red brick wall which shut the vegetable garden from view. To the northwest was a grove of black walnuts and cork oaks planted by John Quincy Adams fifty years before. It was a solitary, sheltered little journey to the War Office and for that reason, Lincoln was fond of it.

As he moved deliberately along the path, he became vaguely conscious that he had passed some one. He turned. In the dim portico light, one of the two infantry sentinels was standing at present arms and would be obliged to stand there until the President returned his salute. This was one of Lincoln's many reasons for disliking the guardianship Stanton recently had forced on him. He sighed, then smiled and taking off his hat bowed to the soldier. The soldier returned the smile and Lincoln continued his journey.

The sentinels by Lincoln's orders were not permitted to patrol beyond the actual line of the White House structure. So it was simple for him to elude detection, to slip into Adams' Grove, to cross the grove, leap the fence and skirt La Fayette Square without any one's taking alarm. Not that his desire was to do anything less innocuous than to cover alone the three miles that led to his summer residence in the grounds of the Soldiers' Home. He sometimes thought that being buried alive could be no worse than to live as he did, forever under view. Frequently, he felt suffocated by it, half maddened.

He covered the three miles rapidly and when he reached the cottage where Mrs. Lincoln and Tad were waiting for him, he silenced his wife's reproaches for coming alone by remarking that he'd eaten nothing since breakfast. While Mary was giving rapid orders for a tray supper, he sat on the little front porch, rocking gently and smiling to himself. He felt better.

He insisted on having the tray on his knees with only the light from the parlor window to see by and was eating blackberries and cream when the Presidential carriage, with its cavalry escort, swept furiously up the driveway.

A man with a black chin beard and silver-rimmed spectacles sprang out of the barouche and rushed up the steps. The light turned the white streak in his whiskers to a golden ribbon.

"Hello, Mr. Stanton! Has Sheridan caught Early?" Lincoln grinned at his caller.

The Secretary of War stood speechless, for a moment. He was hatless and wore a black alpaca office coat. His eyes behind his glasses were furious.

"By God, Lincoln! Is it nothing to you that you've taken ten years from my life? How did you get here?"

Mary Lincoln, who had been walking through the garden, gathered up her billowing black muslin skirts and scurried up the steps. She was very pretty. Her great blue eyes with lashes that an actress might have envied would have given her beauty even had she not been possessed of a fine blonde skin and of dimples that flashed in her round cheeks when she spoke.

She interrupted her husband's apology. "You really mustn't speak so to Mr. Lincoln!" she protested. "You turn your care of him into mere vindictiveness, Mr. Stanton."

"I'm sorry you don't like my manners, madam," roared Stanton, "but I know no other way to affect him.

The times never were so malignant for your husband! There are thousands of people North and South who would rather see him murdered than re-elected."

Mary, suddenly white, turned on the President. "He's right! How could you do this, Mr. Lincoln? Was it fair to me or our children since you won't recognize what you owe to the country?"

Lincoln looked at the Secretary of War reproachfully. "See what you've done, Mr. Stanton?—brought war into my peaceful home." He showed his fine white teeth in a grin.

Stanton tugged at his beard and his lips twitched. "If your wife will agree to discipline you, I can retire with a relieved mind!" he exclaimed. "I always have said I wish Mrs. Lincoln were one of my generals. The war would have ended in six weeks if I'd had a few fighters like her."

Mary raised her eyebrows. "If that's your idea of a compliment, Mr. Secretary—

"Help!" ejaculated Stanton, backing down the steps. "I've got to get back at once, Mr. Lincoln. I'll borrow this vehicle, if you don't mind. I leave him to you for correction, Mrs. Lincoln. Don't spare him!"

He jumped into the barouche and was instantly whirled down the avenue in a cloud of dust. The cavalry escort withdrew to its position for the night.

Mary Lincoln watched the men maneuver and said in a satisfied voice. "At least you're safe for twelve hours."

"You're getting a mania on the subject, Mary," said Lincoln, pulling her little hand within his arm. "Let's take a walk in the garden."

"We're going to stay right on this porch," she exclaimed, freeing her hand to draw an envelope from her skirt pocket. "Look at that!"

The President looked. Within the envelope was a card

on which a picture of Lincoln had been pasted. Some one had drawn a rope around his neck and a few clever touches had put into the face the agony of strangulation. Crimson ink made a horrible and suggestive splotch on the breast.

Mary gave a long-drawn sob. "That was on my desk, this morning! Abr'am, it *kills* me to see these things. And on the top of this you run away from protection just as Bob used to when he was a baby! Just that childishly! The anxiety is turning my brain!"

For a moment Lincoln saw red. "Good God!" he shouted. "What's that mail clerk doing to let such a thing get by him! Why should *you* receive that thing?"

"It's better for me than for you!" Mary laid her head wearily against his arm.

"Nothing of the sort! Nothing of the sort! They don't bother me in the least! But why any one should want to torture *you*—that mail clerk will have to go! He's a fool!" dashing the picture to the floor.

Mary was quick to follow her advantage. "Promise me never to come out here alone again!"

He looked down at her and his charming smile replaced the indignation on his lips. "I'll promise, if you'll agree not to let these maunderings of diseased minds upset you."

"I promise," she whispered with quivering chin.

Then they went into the house together.

The following morning Lincoln took the offensive photograph with him to the War Office, and while waiting for Stanton to come in, he showed it to Major Eckert, the Superintendent of the military telegraph. Eckert winced as he gazed at the horror. He was a powerfully built man of about forty, with a handsome smooth-shaven face of extraordinary intelligence. He was directly responsible to the Secretary of War who had made

himself absolute czar of all military telegraphic communications. Even the President received no messages that did not pass through Stanton's hands. It was at times a most exasperating arrangement but on the whole a wise one, Lincoln felt, and so he acquiesced to it. Major Eckert, as Superintendent, had in many aspects the most confidential position in the entire war-service. It was no less difficult because of Stanton's unequable temper. But the Secretary had as much confidence in his Superintendent as he had in any human being and Lincoln trusted Eckert, completely, and liked him.

"Major," he said, "I don't see how any human being could be vile enough to send such a thing to a man's wife, do you?"

Eckert's clean-cut jaw set stiffly. "Yes, sir, I do. This war has produced unsounded depths of villainy on both sides. I'm ashamed of my kind." They were standing in the cipher-room and the Major added as he walked toward David Bates' desk, "That fellow whom Chief-of-Detectives Baker planted for Mr. Stanton as confidential messenger between Jacob Thompson in Montreal and the powers-that-be in Richmond has already justified our confidence. He notified us day before yesterday that Thompson was going to send some of his henchmen to take our lone-lorn war boat out there on the Great Lakes."

"The steamer *Michigan!*" exclaimed Lincoln.

"Yes, sir," nodded Eckert. "But we telegraphed at once to Detroit headquarters and told them to warn the *Michigan*. A fellow named John Beall had the job in charge for Thompson. He gathered up about a score of trusty souls and they boarded the merchant-steamer *Philo Parsons* as passengers, yesterday. It plies between Detroit and Sandusky. They easily took the old tub from the crew, then in true pirate fashion they sailed up to

another merchant boat, took off her passengers and sunk her. Next they headed for the steamer *Michigan* in Sandusky Bay but when they saw the *Michigan* was cleared for action, they turned tail and paddled for Canada and actually got there safely. There was no one killed."

Lincoln laughed heartily. "Well, I suppose that was a defensible expedition under the rules of warfare! You must thank our detective friend for me. Do you know him?"

"Not personally but we shall, later. He will pass through here with his letters and we may copy them if we wish. They'll be in code but we've yet to meet a cipher our chaps have been floored by." He waved a proud hand at the young cipher-men, hard at work at their desks.

Lincoln followed Eckert's glance admiringly as he remarked, "Mr. Stanton says he wouldn't exchange his cipher-men for the whole of the Union army and I don't know but what he's right. I want to see that messenger, Major, first time he turns up. What's his name?"

Eckert whispered, "He has only a number here, Number Seven. But his name is Richard Montgomery. He's highly intelligent and adroit and certainly as brave as they make 'em."

"Must be," agreed the President, going on into Stanton's room.

It was not many days after this conversation that the towns along the Canadian border were thrown into panic by an attack on St. Albans, Vermont, a village about fifteen miles from the frontier. On October 19th Confederate Lieutenant Young and twenty-five other Confederate soldiers, not in uniform, rode upon the town and attempted to burn it. They used a chemical preparation, however, which failed of its purpose in any whole-

sale way. Shouting that they were Confederate soldiers getting even for Sheridan's campaign in the Shenandoah Valley, the party turned the peaceful town into a riot. They robbed the three banks of some $200,000 and seized all the horses to be found. They killed one citizen and wounded another and then galloped off. A posse started in pursuit and with the help of the Canadian police arrested Young and twelve others. They were thrust into a Canadian jail.

The telegraphic news of the arrest of the raiders had scarcely reached the War Office and Lincoln and Stanton were holding council on it when Major Eckert broke in on them with word that Number Seven had come in. Stanton ordered him to appear at once.

There sauntered into the room a short, slender man of indeterminate age and of most ordinary type; brownish whiskers, a brownish sack suit and cloak. Only his eyes, which were deep gray or black, Lincoln could not be sure which color predominated, told of a personality that must have been anything but ordinary.

The spy bowed and said, quietly, "I tried to get word to you about St. Albans, Mr. Stanton, but I learned of it too late."

"More of Jacob Thompson, eh?" ejaculated Stanton. He suddenly lifted a tiny bottle from his desk and shook a few drops of its contents on his beard. The odor of eau-de-cologne filled the room.

Lincoln, repressing a smile, watched the effect of this familiar rite on Number Seven. Not a muscle of the man's face changed. Poor old Stanton must be much perturbed. He only resorted to eau-de-cologne when his nerve was shaken.

"Not Jacob Thompson directly, sir," answered Montgomery. "At least, one of the other commissioners, Clement C. Clay told me that the scheme was all Young's own. He had authorization from the Confederate

Secretary of War to organize a small company in Canada for special service. Mr. Clay says he, himself, gave Young $400 for this particular expedition and added his personal authorization for the attack."

"Now laugh at that, Mr. Lincoln!" snarled Stanton.

But the President only sighed. "What can those fellows at Richmond think to gain by such foolishness!"

"Foolishness!" Stanton stared hopelessly at the President and turned to Number Seven. "Do you know of further plans of this dastardly nature?"

"Yes, sir, Rochester and Buffalo are to be raided, though perhaps the jailing of Young may head that off."

"I'll head it off, Young in jail or out," ejaculated Stanton. He called in his secretary and dictated several telegrams, while Lincoln sat on the old sofa ruminating on the general cussedness of human nature but not deeply disturbed by either Clay's or Thompson's efforts, which he was convinced could do no real harm. Number Seven standing at the end of Stanton's tall desk made entries in a note book.

Major Eckert came in as Stanton's secretary went out. "We've deciphered this letter, Mr. Lincoln."

"Read it to us," said the President.

It was a letter from Clement C. Clay to Judah P. Benjamin giving a detailed account of the circumstances of the St. Albans raid. He said that Lieutenant Young was well known to him, that Young's heart was in the Southern cause and that in burning and robbing St. Albans, he had acted in accordance with Clay's instructions. But for the aid of Young and his associates in their pending trial, he begged for additional documents showing that they acted under the authority of the Confederate States Government. He had, of course, he said, such authority, "but it should be more explicit as regards the particular acts complained of. When Young proposed passing through New England burning some towns

and robbing them of whatever he could convert to the use of the Confederate Government, I approved as justifiable retaliation—. All that a large portion of the Northern people especially in the Northwest want to resist the oppressions of the despotism at Washington is a leader. They are ripe for resistance and it may come soon after the Presidential election. No people of Anglo-Saxon blood can long endure the usurpations and tyrannies of Lincoln."

"We ought to be able to keep the original of that letter," said Lincoln. "If Canada is going to permit armed forces to be raised on her soil and these forces to invade our territory, it can be taken as a gross example of non-neutrality. This letter, if endorsed by Davis, will be first-class evidence."

Stanton nodded. "But we mustn't give Montgomery away. He's too valuable a man."

"Why don't you catch me, and put me in prison, sir?" suggested Number Seven, coolly, "and after you've robbed me of my papers, let me escape."

"It must be done very carefully." Stanton grasped at the suggestion eagerly. "We'll set Baker after you but not even your jailors must know. How you'll manage the escape, I can't see."

"You could—" began Eckert.

"Better leave the escape end to me," suggested Number Seven, "the more sincere it is, the better."

"Return the papers, Major," ordered Stanton.

The spy glanced at the clock. "I'll be at Surrattsville, Maryland, in the tavern, this morning." He buttoned his cloak.

Lincoln shook hands with him. "My hat is off to you, sir."

"Thank you, Mr. President," said the man, simply, and he followed Eckert from the room.

CHAPTER III

MUDDLEHEAD

THE next day but one, Mary called her husband's attention to an item in a Washington paper. A suspected spy, it said, had escaped early in the night from the old Capital prison. He had knocked down a guard, gagged and bound him and had used the guard's keys. The alarm had been given almost instantly and the spy had been shot at as he ran across the yard into the tree-grown street. He had been wounded as a splotch of blood showed where he had fallen. But even at that the man had escaped in some one's carriage.

Lincoln gave a chuckle. "By jings, what a man!"

Mary looked at him disgustedly. "Sometimes, Abr'am, I actually wonder whether you know there's a war going on in this country or not. That man was a *spy*."

"A *suspected* spy, my dear," said Lincoln, apologetically. Then he laughed, delightedly, and left the breakfast table before Mary could call him further to account.

He did not see Number Seven on his return trip from Richmond. Charles Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, however, told him that the spy had been wounded in the arm. It was a most realistic escape! Dana also showed Lincoln the de-coded copy of a letter from Jefferson Davis to Jacob Thompson. "—there is yet time to colonize many voters before Nov. 8. A blow will shortly be stricken here. It is not quite time. General Longstreet is to attack Sheridan without delay and then move north as far as practicable toward unprotected points.—

He will endeavor to assist the Republicans in collecting their ballots. Be watchful and assist him."

The President gave the letter back to Dana. "Looks as if Jeff was as worried about my election as I am!"

"Mr. Stanton's comment was that Davis is an unmitigated scoundrel!" smiled the assistant Secretary of War. "One can't imagine you stooping to such tricks as Davis has, Mr. Lincoln."

"Well," replied Lincoln, mildly, "I'm not as desperate about Jeff as he is about me!"

"You mustn't ignore the menace in this, sir," protested Dana. "Remember there are 100,000 Sons of Liberty in Indiana alone bent on defeating you by any method and the North by any treachery."

"Nothing could make me believe that 100,000 Democrats were disloyal to the North, no matter how they hate me," was Lincoln's reply vehemently given.

He could not bring himself to take the Rebels' war behind the Union lines too bitterly, however technically outlawed were their methods; not when their abortive efforts were consonant with Sheridan's dreadful march through Virginia. That Jacob Thompson and Company were not discouraged by the failure of their efforts to date was proved a day or so after the President's conversation with Dana when Seward showed him two letters he had received. One was from the Federal consul at Halifax, Nova Scotia, stating that secessionists in that city were asserting secretly that plans had been completed for setting fire to the chief cities of the North on election day. The letter had been turned over to Stanton and he at once had set his telegraph operators at work sending warnings to the civil and military authorities from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

The other letter concerned the routine business of the Adjutant-General of New York. The only bite in its

otherwise dull contents was in the post-script. "There is reason to believe that Lincoln will be assassinated soon."

Stanton was present when Lincoln read the missives. Under the Secretary's stern eye, the President admitted that the communications were disturbing. But, he insisted, the country's and his own welfare were in the best human hands obtainable, namely those of Edwin M. Stanton. He therefore refused to worry. Stanton actually blushed, forgot his proposed threats and the session ended in his listening with patience not untinged by enjoyment to a long reading from Orpheus Kerr.

Just before election day, Number Seven slipped into Washington and told Eckert and Stanton that the commissioners were having trouble with the chemical formula for setting the fires and that the incendiary attack had been put off until Thanksgiving week.

Extraordinary precautions were taken to prevent violence on election day, November 8, and it passed with, all things considered, astounding orderliness.

After all, God was, as Lincoln believed, on the side of the Union and he was re-elected.

On November 9, John Wilkes Booth registered at the National Hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue and was as usual, given the best room in the house. He had no engagement to play in Washington, Wilkes told the clerk who knew him well and was one of his ardent admirers. He was, said the actor, planning a little vacation trip across the Eastern Branch of the Potomac in lower Maryland. The young actor was very restless. He took a drink or two and played a few frames of pool, then sauntered out onto the Avenue.

The November night was raw but the street was crowded. Ambulances and army transport teams rattled and banged over the muddy, rutted paving. Officers,

whether on business or not, galloped at breakneck speed. Wounded soldiers moved up and down the sidewalks, loitering in the bright lights of saloons and oyster houses. Women of the streets plied their trade brazenly.

Immorality and brutality were at flood height in Washington. One of the bureaus of the Treasury Department had just been cleared of the harlots whom the bureau chief had been employing as clerks. On election day, a well-known Senator had been knocked down not far from where Booth was standing by a woman he had outraged. Drunkenness in Congress was a common occurrence. Cheating the Government was so prevalent that Lincoln despaired of preventing it and Secretary Stanton's gallant fight against army corruption far outweighed in the President's mind any smallnesses of the War Secretary's character.

Wilkes Booth strolled or stopped to gaze as the whim took him. He wore a soft white hat set rakishly on the side of his handsome head, a black cape was flung Spanish fashion across his chest and over his shoulder. He was the target not only of the invitations of prostitutes and of the jibes of the drunk, but of the delighted attentions of admirers, men and women who shook his hand eagerly and asked him when he was to play and what.

To all the latter he made the same graceful bow and the same reply in a carefully modulated voice: "I'm in quest of relaxation now. A little later, Hamlet and Mark Antony. The date—not yet!"

Toward the White House end of the Avenue a marching brass band and a long procession of citizens carrying kerosene torches and transparencies shoved all other pedestrians to the walls or the gutter. Wilkes Booth joined the tail of the parade. Constantly growing, the line was over a thousand strong by the time the north gates of the White House were reached. The Cavalry

Guards stationed at either post made no effort to question or control the procession. Indeed, it was well known that Lincoln would not suffer them to challenge any peaceable persons who sought to enter the grounds. The beautiful pile of the Executive Mansion was dim against the sky. Some of the upper windows were lighted but the lower floor was in darkness save for the gas lamp which threw up in glowing relief the chaste loveliness of the columns upholding the roof of the front portico. The crowd packed itself on the lawn before this colonnade and began to shout, "Lincoln! We want you, Lincoln!"

Wilkes Booth, silent but very observant, worked his way to the inner pillars of the entrance. Here stood two sentries and a doorman. Several persons ran up the steps and entered the hall but a sudden cry, "There he is! There's Father Abraham!" brought them back. Booth returned with them to the outer columns and followed the upward gaze of the crowd. At the second story window above the main door appeared the tall, familiar figure, the quiet face lighted by a candle in the hands of eleven-year-old Tad Lincoln.

Booth decidedly did not wish to hear the President's speech. And anyhow, he had other business. He bit his nails and started on a quiet prowl. The sentry walking slowly in the shadow of the west wing did not challenge the actor, though he saw him leave the brick path and cross the lawn in the direction of Adams' Grove of walnuts. He was facing the portico when Wilkes emerged from the wood, and rounded the brick wall near the turnstile and so Booth investigated the vegetable garden, unmolested, though he flashed a dark lantern from parsnip and turnip heap to grape and peach growing thick against the wall.

It was quite feasible, the actor decided, to hoist a man

over this wall from the path and to carry him thence across the grounds southwest to 17th Street. A house must be found in the lonely marsh-reaches of 17th Street with proper access to the Potomac. Thinking deeply, Wilkes returned to the front lawn and as he worked his way back through the crowd he listened reluctantly to that deliberate voice which in accent still was haunted by its Kentucky beginnings.

"—While deeply grateful for this mark of their confidence in me, if I know my heart, my gratitude is free from any trace of personal triumph. It is no pleasure to me to triumph over any one. But I give thanks to the Almighty for this evidence of the people's resolution to stand by free government and the rights of humanity."

Lincoln bowed and Tad, with a grin, blew out the candle. The band struck up "The Star-Spangled Banner" and the crowd, cheering and huzza-ing, dispersed.

Back in his room at the hotel, Wilkes lighted an excellent cigar and poured out a stiff drink of brandy. Then he began to study a map of Washington and of that portion of Maryland which lay south of the city, separated from it by the Eastern Branch. After an hour at this he rose and walking slowly up and down the room began to declaim with faultless elocution:

> "Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
> Like a Colossus, and we petty men
> Walk under his huge legs and peep about
> To find ourselves dishonorable graves."

Then he stood for a long time before the mirror staring at his own beautiful reflection.

The next morning after a late breakfast, he strolled over to a livery stable on 6th Street and had a talk with the owner. He wanted to buy a couple of horses, he explained, which he could use either for driving or riding.

"Then you won't get nothin' much of neither," was the liveryman's comment. He was a red-headed man with a snaggle tooth which wiggled as he chewed and spat. "I keep my horses to one job or the other. If you want a family horse of that kind you'd get it over in Maryland. I hear there's a lot of Secesh folks hiding good horseflesh. They might part to you."

"What makes you say that, Pete?" demanded Wilkes, quickly.

"I reckon I've heard you often enough to realize you'd wheedle a dog to give up his tail if you wanted it."

Booth laughed. "You flatter me, Pete! Where shall I go in Maryland?"

"Oh, cross the Eastern Branch and work south! I don't know a living soul there myself, officially, so that's the best I can do for you."

"I'll try my luck!" Wilkes nodded. "But not to-day. Instead I'll try one of these highly specialized nags of yours and view the dirty city of Washington from its back."

He was a good judge of horseflesh and after going over the stable he rode forth on a gay little bay mare who was all muscle and good will.

Late in the afternoon he located just the dwelling for his needs. It was known as the Van Ness house, built in 1820 and now deserted. It stood on 17th Street, alone, and was accessible to a lonely part of the Potomac. A story and a half brick house, it had one marked peculiarity. The partition walls were of brick and those of the first floor were continued in the cellar, dividing the under portion of the dwelling into several unlighted cells. Nothing could have suited Wilkes more completely. He rode back to the livery stable, humming in the twilight, and gave orders for a horse on which to ride into lower Maryland the next day.

That night he again followed a rejoicing mob to the White House and continued his investigations of the west end of the twenty acres that comprised the grounds. And again he heard that thoughtful slow voice from the upper window giving to the milling crowd portions of the philosophy wrought in his soul by the exquisite pains of his experiences.

"The strife of the election is but human nature applied to the facts of the case. What has occurred in this case must ever occur in similar cases. Human nature will not change. In any great national trial we shall have as weak and as strong, as silly and as wise, as bad and as good! Let us then study these as incidents to learn wisdom from and none of them as wrongs to be revenged—"

Booth grinned sardonically. "The man's uneasy," he said aloud.

He went directly to bed from the White House for he planned an early start next day.

He had not needed Pete's suggestions as regarded lower Maryland. He had come down from Canada armed with a letter from Thompson to a certain Dr. Queen near Bryantown, about thirty miles south of Washington.

He reached Queen's place late in the afternoon. The doctor and his family looked the actor over and rose at once to his charm. They asked him to stay over Sunday while he searched for the horses and the farm he proposed to buy. Wilkes was known even in this quiet back-country. That evening he intrigued the Queens still further with sleight-of-hand tricks and recitations from Shakespeare. And on Sunday he went to church with them.

After service, at the church gate, where the neighborhood congregated for the week's gossip, Wilkes was introduced to Dr. Samuel Mudd. Mudd was a tall, slender

man of thirty-five with fine ascetic features, keen blue eyes and sandy hair. He greeted Booth with grave courtesy and when Queen observed that the actor had brought a letter from Canada, Mudd asked,

"How can I serve you, sir?"

"By telling me where I can buy a horse broken both to saddle and harness, yet retains its spirit," replied Wilkes instantly.

Dr. Mudd pulled thoughtfully at his reddish mustache. "I think my neighbor Mr. Gardiner, has such an animal," he said at last. "If you'd care to ride to my place this evening, I'll take you to him."

Wilkes bowed and replaced his soft black hat. Dr. Mudd returned the bow and replaced a shining stove pipe.

That evening, Wilkes rode through the gray, crisp twilight along the red clay roads to Mudd's house. It was a comfortable white frame farm dwelling, set in brown fields and surrounded by a split rail fence. Mrs. Mudd had cleared up the supper when he arrived but in spite of his protest she prepared a fresh meal. After supper, he sat with the family talking brilliantly of his acting career. It was not until all the others had gone to bed that he drew his chair close to the doctor's and began really to tell his tale.

He felt that he was not at his most debonair with Mudd. The sensitiveness to opinion begot by his extreme egotism, told him that the doctor did not like him. Why, Wilkes couldn't imagine. He set to work to win this quiet, keen gentleman.

First, he gave the preamble which he had used with Sam Arnold and Mike O'Laughlin. Leaning forward with the wood fire lighting his beautiful, expressive face or pacing the floor, big white fingers running through his

hair, he made his declaration of faith in the Confederate cause.

When he paused, Dr. Mudd threw another stick of wood on the coals. "Very pretty, my boy!" he remarked, dryly. "Now to get down to cases, what do you want of me?"

Wilkes bit his lip and had more than half a thought of walking out of the house. But he needed Mudd, so he sat down again and stretched his booted legs to the fire, saying coldly, "I suppose you are at one with all of us in seeing that Abe Lincoln is the backbone of Union solidarity?"

"Of what solidarity there is, yes," eyeing the actor keenly.

"I propose to kidnap Abe Lincoln, take him to Richmond and turn him over to President Davis as the perfect means of giving us the victory."

"Will Davis accept him?" demanded Mudd, bluntly.

"Will he *not?* Certainly, he will accept him. If he has any qualms, Secretary Benjamin will quiet them. I'm going on Jacob Thompson's authority."

Dr. Mudd, with nervous fingers on the arms of his chair, frowned into the fire. After a long moment he said, "Kidnaping is a dirty, dishonorable business."

Wilkes' face went purple. "Is it as dishonorable as the acts which brought this war on our beloved country?" he shouted. "Could any act known to history outside of the crucifixion be as filthy as Abe Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation? Come, doctor, let's be frank. My honor's as dear to me as any other Southerner's. But what does personal honor weigh against the ending of this war? That's what I shall do, sir, make an end of bloodshed in our lovely land.

> "No more shall trenching warfare channel her fields
> Nor bruise her flowerets with the armed hoofs
> Of hostile paces,—"

The doctor jerked his shoulders impatiently. "Oh, I'll grant your intimacy with Henry IV as well as an honorable purpose! Go on and give me details."

Wilkes outlined the three plans clearly and succinctly. Mudd, when he had finished, made a grimace of distaste. "Because the North is bestial is no reason we should be. But—"

"What is there bestial in my plan?" cried Booth. "I shall give old Abe every care. Not a hair of his gorilla head shall be harmed, I'll make his way sweet with myrrh and anoint him with attar of roses if it'll ease your scruples, sir."

"Don't be more melodramatic than you can help. Keep cool, Booth," warned Mudd, "or you'll defeat yourself. A conspirator must be ice. I suppose your two problems in lower Maryland are to find the route and the proper people. I will take you to Gardiner to-morrow. You can get a horse from him. Tell him you wish to look at farms further south. While you've been talking, I've been thinking of a family at Surrattsville. The father was a stout Unionist but he died a year or so ago and Mrs. Surratt and her son have dared avow to those of us in the know, their equally stout Southern loyalty. They own the tavern and are a headquarters for Confederate loyalists hereabouts. John Surratt, the son, is a messenger for the Richmond government and must have a wonderful knowledge of the country-side between Washington and Richmond. I don't know whether he's at home or not but I'll make inquiries."

He sat staring at the fire, thinking, Wilkes supposed, of ways and means of helping him. But not so. Mudd suddenly looked up to say, "It's an extremely risky and unsavory business and I don't like it. Let's go to bed."

Booth stared at him in silence and in silence followed him upstairs to the guest-room.

He bought a bay horse with one eye from Gardiner,

the next day, and went to Surrattsville which is about thirty miles south of Washington. It was a rough, desolate hamlet but the tavern was a comfortable-looking place and Booth riding up to the door decided to spend several days there. But the decision was immediately modified for the man at the bar told him that Mrs. Surratt had just leased the place to him and had gone to Washington to live. Wilkes sat down thoughtfully with a bottle of brandy. The last three days had taught him that it was going to take a great deal more time than he had realized to mature his plans and, even were they complete, the frightful condition of the roads must prohibit any immediate attempts at abduction. Granted that through young Surratt he'd be able to place relays of fast horses along a carefully selected route, the mud would practically prohibit their use for weeks to come. He had believed that by the middle of November, he would have Lincoln imprisoned in Richmond. He now saw that this was hopeless. He decided to spend only the night here, then return to Washington and try to locate the Surratts. Mudd must be beguiled into giving him the right kind of an introduction. Patience! Patience! Abe Lincoln's sort of patience. And on this thought he slept. Nor was he troubled by evil dreams.

CHAPTER IV

LINCOLN'S FRIEND

WHEN Booth however, reached the National Hotel late the next night, he found a letter which, once more, unsettled his mind. The letter was from his brother, Edwin. Edwin was going to give a benefit performance of "Julius Cæsar" to help raise money to erect a statue of Shakespeare in Central Park, New York. The three Booth brothers, he wrote, were to take part. Edwin would play Brutus, Junius would play Cassius and Wilkes would play Mark Antony. Their mother would be in the audience. What a moment for a mother! thought Wilkes. The play was to be given on November 25. So on November 15, Wilkes went up to New York.

Major-General Dix, commanding the department of the East, had been incredulous from the first about Thompson's incendiary plot and so had the city's mayor. Both had tried and failed to track the conspirators and both finally laughed at Stanton's fears and warnings. After two weeks of excited orderings and warnings by mail and telegraph, the Secretary, thoroughly exasperated, sent Major Eckert to New York with orders to "throw the fear of God into the damn' fools."

Eckert reached New York late Thanksgiving evening and the next morning set about his difficult task. But General Dix and the Mayor were overworked and overstrained and utterly fed up on false alarms. They declared that they could handle any average riot but that vague notices hinting of fires yet to be set must be ignored.

How could the city be better guarded than it already was against fires? If Stanton had told them *where* the fires were to be started, they would guarantee to put out the flames. Eckert understood their position and was not unsympathetic. But he knew Richard Montgomery, therefore he was in an advantageous position. One who had heard Number Seven's colorless recital must believe it. He told the two officials so.

"Yes! Yes! No doubt!" shouted the much-hectored Dix. "But where, where in this city of half-a-million-or-I-don't-know-how-many-buildings are these devilish fires to be set?"

Utterly baffled, Eckert left the City Hall where the conference had taken place. It was drawing toward twilight. His first impulse was to return to Washington to learn if by any chance Number Seven had turned up with further details. Then with a contraction of his heart, he realized that Thanksgiving week was half spent and that he dare not take time for the trip to the capital. He decided to return to his room at the St. Nicholas Hotel and make Secretary Stanton a full report in cipher, asking for further orders. He boarded a Broadway bus and sat with folded arms, oblivious to his surroundings, a black cloud of dread befogging his keen mind. Sherman's march was no such horror as this threatened to be, he told himself. Sherman was not putting the torch to dwellings filled with unsuspecting men, women and children.

He moistened his lips and suddenly becoming conscious of some one's gaze, looked up. Opposite him sat a clean-shaven, shabby man, who seemed to be actually ill, he was so pale, so haggard. At first glance he seemed to be an utter stranger to Major Eckert, then something familiar about the fine, dark eyes pierced through the fog of apprehension. He returned the man's anguished

stare and then recognized him. It was Number Seven!

Neither man made the slightest gesture of recognition. But when, a moment later, Eckert left the bus, Montgomery followed him. They entered the hotel, the spy following the major to his room. Here Eckert locked the door, closed the window curtains and lighted a lamp, while Montgomery sank exhausted into a chair and began to speak.

"I only found it out last night and dared not wire. There was no time to use the newspaper columns. I was in despair until I saw you—To-night at ten o'clock the fires will be started. The hotels are—get paper, Eckert, —there are twelve of them." In a weak voice he recited the names of the city's best known hotels, adding Barnum's Museum, and several theaters and other places of amusement with a long list of public buildings. "They're to use Greek fire. In the hotels they will take rooms, pile up the furniture and at exactly ten, squirt on the sulphur and phosphorus, lock the doors and disappear. In the theaters they'll work beneath the stage. In the public buildings, clockwork. In the—" He toppled over in a faint.

Eckert sprang to his aid with his brandy flask and in a moment Montgomery sat up to say, apologetically, "I've neither eaten nor slept for forty-eight hours. All I need is a little food."

The Major rang the bell and holding the door so that the spy could not be seen, he ordered a bountiful meal. While he waited for its arrival, he finished setting down Montgomery's facts and when he had received the tray at the door, he left the spy to his food and rushed out into the night. There were four hours in which to prepare for the flames.

With the list flung at them by Eckert, General Dix and the Mayor rose magnificently to the emergency and

when, an hour later, the Major returned to his hotel, the buildings threatened were already policed and fire apparatus in experienced hands was waiting for the clock to strike ten. Richard Montgomery had disappeared.

The play of "Julius Cæsar" had progressed to Cæsar's death when a shrill cry of "Fire!" broke in on Mark Antony's oration. Instantly the audience was in an uproar. A sudden burst of smoke swept through the windows. Edwin Booth lying in Cæsar's last poignant sleep, sprang to his feet and striding to the footlights, sent his magnificent, magic voice to the outermost doors of the theater, hushing the outcries, stilling the panic. As the people paused to listen, a policeman walked up the aisle, toward the orchestra-pit, proclaiming that the fire was in the adjacent building, that it was under control and that there was no danger to the theater. And so the threatened catastrophe was checked.

Throughout the city, the story of the incendiary attack was much the same. Soldiers, police and firemen by the hundreds met flame and fear as they were born and although in spite of their efforts considerable dollar damage was done, no human life was lost. The net effect of the attempt was to turn many erstwhile friends of the Confederacy to contemptuous enemies.

Major Eckert, feeling a decade or two younger, set out for Washington on the following afternoon. He was on a Cortlandt steel ferry, crossing to his train in New Jersey when he picked up an envelope, unsealed, soiled and unaddressed. Moving to the prow of the boat where he could find solitude, Eckert examined the contents of the envelope. He was dumbfounded to discover first a photograph of Lincoln, with a noose around his neck, a distorted face and red inkspots on the breast. It was a precise duplicate of the card which Mrs. Lincoln had received. As if this strange coincidence were not

enough, there accompanied the picture a letter containing minute directions for the bearer's part in the burning of New York, also referring to a plot to kidnap the President. There was no name used.

Eckert hid his find in his pocket and sauntered through the boat. It was fairly well filled but he could see no evidence that any of the passengers was conscious of having lost something. The discovery was so important that instead of taking his train, he returned with the boat to New York. He at once sought the headquarters of the military detective police and left the envelope with them after exacting a promise that they would within the week, send it to Secretary Stanton. Eckert had great faith in Stanton's fertility of suggestion in the delicate art of sleuthing!

Wilkes Booth had heard in Montreal of the schemes to fire New York but absorbed in his own schemes he had failed to think of the plan as a source of danger to those he loved. He was horrified at the thought of his mother sitting proudly and placidly in the Winter Garden while fire swept against the very walls. It was, he told himself, another example of what such despotism as Lincoln's could bring a desperate people. More than ever he felt his duty to be manifest.

There was only one man in New York to whom Wilkes hinted of his secret. This was his friend Samuel Chester, an actor in Edwin's company. Wilkes told Chester that he was not going to act in the North any more.

"I've taken my wardrobe to Canada and from there, I'll take ship and run the blockade into Charleston. I've got a big speculation with a lot of risk but a lot of money in it. Don't you want to come in?"

"If it requires money," replied Chester, "I don't. And I've got a family so don't expect me to take risks."

"I'll supply the money!" Wilkes took out his bill case.

"Don't show off, Johnny Wilkes," grinned Chester. "I won't be patronized."

"Oh, go to the devil!" grunted Wilkes and turned on his heel. After all, he'd take no one else on until he'd met the Surratts.

He found himself feeling a little sentimental about his old New York friends as the Christmas season approached. They all loved him so! They were so proud of him! It was a pity to think that shortly they'd all be hating him. The thought of this hurt his vanity. If only they could be made to understand, surely they'd not judge him harshly. He could say nothing now, of course. But he could write, afterward. Or he could write now and leave the letter with some one to be opened when old Abe should be safely deposited in Richmond.

He settled down in Edwin's beautiful library one morning about a week after Thanksgiving and wrote a letter embodying all the reasons which had proved efficacious with Arnold, O'Laughlin and Mudd. It required hours of writing and re-writing before he had completed the task to his own satisfaction. Then he deposited the letter with his brother-in-law, to be opened only when Wilkes gave him permission to do so. This task completed, he began his preparations for returning to Washington although he promised his mother to be back in New York for Christmas.

The attempted burning of New York appealed to the President only as another example of what war can do to human decency. War was the breakdown of moral law and if General Sherman, that upright, kindly father of a family, could put the torch to Georgia, driving whole towns into the swamps, one couldn't be too nice in judging Jacob Thompson. He was quite willing to admit that this war behind the lines was illegal according to the laws of civilized nations, that the citizens of the North

had not turned traitor and were not in the same class as the Secessionists and yet he was not willing to agree that, if they identified the men who had done the dirty work, they should be hanged. He voiced this unwillingness to Stanton on the evening of the day on which Wilkes Booth had turned his mad letter over to his brother-in-law.

"If—*if* we can identify!" grunted Stanton. "You forget Number Seven, sir!"

Lincoln who was drooping over the end of the Secretary's desk straightened up with interest. "So he's turned up again! Where is he?"

"Came and went while you were visiting hospitals this afternoon," replied Stanton. "Here's the trophy of his most recent hunt."

Lincoln put on his spectacles and took the de-coded letter. It was from Jacob Thompson to Judah P. Benjamin, the Confederate Secretary of State, dated December 3, 1864.

". . . I have relaxed no efforts to carry out the objects which the Government had in sending me here. Money has been advanced to Mr. Churchill of Cincinnati to arrange a corps for the purposes of incendiarism in that city. I advanced money to a Mr. Minor Major, $2,000 in Federal currency and soon after several boats were burned in St. Louis, involving an immense loss of property to the enemy. Having nothing else on hand, Col. Martin expressed a desire to burn New York City. He was allowed to do so, and a most daring attempt has been made to fire that city but this reliance on Greek fire proved a misfortune. It cannot be relied on as an agent in such work. I have no faith in it and no attempt shall be made hereafter under my direction with any such material. During my stay in Canada a great amount of property has been destroyed by fire. . . . Should claims

be passed at the War Office for this kind of work not one dollar should be advanced until parties concerned present proofs. Several parties claim to have done the work at St. Louis, New Orleans, Louisville, Brooklyn, Philadelphia and Cairo . . ."

"The nomination of McClellan, followed as it was by divers disclosures, arrests of persons, prominent members, totally demoralized the Sons of Liberty. . . . The vigilance of the Administration, (Federal), its large detective force, the large bounties paid for treachery and the respectable men who have yielded to the temptation, added to the large military force stationed in these States makes organization and preparation almost an impossibility. A large sum of money has been expended in fostering and furthering these operations and now it seems to be of little profit. . . . I infer from your personal in the N. Y. *News* that you wish me to remain here for some time and I obey you. Indeed I have so many papers in my possession which in the hands of the enemy would utterly ruin and destroy very many of the prominent men in the North that a due sense of my obligations to them will force on me the extremest caution in my movements . . . the attempt on New York has produced a great panic which will not subside at their bidding—"

Lincoln laid the shabby missive down and put his glasses back in his vest pocket. "Small potatoes, and few in a hill," was his comment.

"If I can lay hands on Jacob Thompson," said Stanton. "I'll put him in a hell that will roast more than potatoes!"

"I hope this war isn't going to blow out *all* the moral lights in these United and dis-United States," murmured Lincoln. Then he added clearly, "Don't let a desire for retaliation taint your sense of justice, Mr. Stanton—. By the way," with a sly grin, "What are you going to do

to the people who planned to kidnap *you,* Brother Stanton?"

Stanton sat down suddenly on the sofa. "Who's blabbed now?" he groaned.

"Hill Lamon told me," replied the President. "Since Hill's come back from the front, he's done nothing but turn up abduction schemes. That pursuit has taken the place of music, the drama, politics, practical jokes and every other side line with which he used to pass the time. What about this young woman who was spying on *you,* Mr. Secretary?"

"Nothing at all! Nothing at all," fumed Stanton. "Still they might have got me, if you hadn't telegraphed me to come back to Washington. You didn't realize you were playing Providence to me! There is a Secession group with headquarters across the Ohio from Steubenville. They've kept a very pretty girl running back and forth with an unsuspecting neighbor of mine in Steubenville, to keep them informed when I made an anonymous visit back home. Neighbor Burgoyne has regular business in West Virginia and supposed the girl was teaching in Ohio. She crossed on the ferry often with him. When I was out there last month I was going to Wheeling with Dr. William Stanton and they were all set for me, thanks to their young lady spy. But you wired for me the day before I made the trip. Detective Baker unearthed the plot two weeks later."

"Why didn't you tell me so's I could return a few of the compliments you've been paying me for alleged carelessness?" grinned Lincoln.

Stanton did not reply for a moment, then he smiled in his turn. "Here's something else I wasn't going to tell you but it's too good to keep—as showing how different things look from one's own side of the fence. A couple of weeks ago a group of preachers, headed by

the Rev. Byron Sunderland called on me and suggested that if Jefferson Davis were captured and brought here to the Old Capitol Prison, the war would end. They offered their services personally for the abduction. They were so insistent that I finally sent Colonel W. P. Wood to Richmond to see if the project were feasible. He came back last week and reported that the idea was entirely impracticable. Davis is too well guarded. So we heard no more from—"

It was the President's turn to interrupt. "Good God, Mr. Stanton, don't tell me you countenanced such a plan for an instant!" He brought his fist down on his knee. "You astound me! You shock me, Stanton! You should have thrown those fellows out at the first breath of their suggestion." He rose and stood looking down upon the for-once-abashed Secretary of War. "Nothing that's happened since I've been here has impressed me more painfully than this. Is there no one whom war can't contaminate?"

He banged his tall hat on his head, twisted the gray shawl round his shoulders and walked out.

The following afternoon, Charles Dana, Assistant Secretary of War called on the President. He was a heavy-bearded, serious-looking man whom Lincoln never wearied of reminding that he had been an associate of Horace Greeley, the pacifist.

Dana's eyes were twinkling as he laid some papers on the President's desk. "Mr. Stanton says he's afraid to deliver those in person, sir."

"Don't praise me too highly, Mr. Dana! I've never succeeded in suppressing Stanton for more than five minutes! What are these? Must I read them?"

"General Dix thought they were important enough to rush them down from New York by special messenger. A woman picked up these two letters from the floor of a

Third Avenue street car. They were dropped by a very handsome young man, dark and well dressed. The woman reported that as he talked with his companion, he gestured with memorably beautiful white hands. I know you get many threatening letters but one of these is so succinct we hoped it might lead to your being willing to take on a personal body guard."

Lincoln sighed and opened the letter and read:

"Dear Louis. The time has come at last that we have all so wished for and upon you everything depends. As it was decided before you left, we were to cast lots. Accordingly we did so and you are to be the Charlotte Corday of the 19th Century . . . Abe must die and now. You can choose your weapons, the cup, the knife, the bullet. The cup failed us once and might again. . . . You know where to find your friends. Your disguises are so perfect and complete that without one knew your face no police telegraphic dispatch could catch you. . . . Remember, he has ten days. . . . Get introduced, congratulate him, listen to his stories. Not many more will the brute tell to earthly friends. Do anything but fail and meet us at the appointed place within the fortnight. . . .(signed) Charles Selby."

Lincoln removed his spectacles and looked from Dana's deeply concerned eyes out the window. He tried to analyze his own feelings. There was no use telling himself that this note didn't twist him a bit. It hurt to know a man could feel thus about him. Must he for the next week or so look on every stranger as a possible assassin? If he must, his usefulness would cease.

"Has this any connection with the photograph and so forth Eckert found?" he asked, after a moment.

"We don't know," replied Dana. Then he added very

earnestly, "Mr. Lincoln, won't you take these clews more seriously?"

"No! No, Mr. Dana!" exclaimed the President. "I dare not take this sort of thing seriously. Here, leave it with me, I'll attend to it!"

"And the private guard, Mr. Lincoln?" urged Dana.

"Hill Lamon, since Congress took all the job out of the marshalship of Washington, has nothing on earth to do but to nurse me. He's equal to seven guards. Don't worry, Mr. Dana. And tell dear old Stanton not to worry."

Dana went out with a dissatisfied expression on his face. The President picked up the letter to give it to the flames as he had all other threats. But something unaccountable stayed his hand. He folded the document gingerly and placed it in an envelope on which he wrote one word, *Assassination*. Then he filed it in the bureau which stood between the windows.

It seemed to Lincoln an inscrutable coincidence that as he turned from the bureau, John Hay admitted Benjamin Wade, a bitter radical Congressman, who had been trying for months to oust Lamon from his job as Marshal.

"Mr. President," began Wade, abruptly, "I have come to insist that Ward Hill Lamon must go."

"You *insist?*" asked Lincoln, mildly, eyeing Wade's smooth-shaven, tragic face with interest.

"I *insist*. He's an enemy to the black man and you know it. He—"

Lincoln let his anger take command for a moment. "That'll do, Mr. Wade. Don't come to me with any more knocks at Lamon. I backed him in his enforcing of the fugitive slave law here in Washington. It was the only way I knew to show you fellows what that law meant, under your very noses and force you to repeal the iniquitous legislation. This is nothing but malicious

persecution of him by the Abolitionists. You should have learned a lesson from Greeley. He learned his, when the Grand Jury found a bill of indictment against him for malicious libel of Lamon."

"Are you threatening me, Mr. Lincoln?" demanded Wade.

"Take it as you please," replied the President, sternly. "I understand you, fully. You fellows at the other end of the Avenue seem determined to deprive me of every friend I have who's near me and whom I trust. Now let me tell you, sir, that Hill Lamon has been my friend since he came from Virginia to Illinois as a lad of nineteen. He was my law partner and rode the circuit with me. I *know* him, I trust him and I love him. He's the most unselfish man I know. He's discreet and he's the most desperate man in a fight I ever saw. He's my friend and I'm his, and as long as I have these great responsibilities on me, I intend to insist on his being with me. I'll stick by him at all hazards. You can say to your friends in the Congress and elsewhere that they'll have to bring stronger proof than I've seen yet to make me think Hill Lamon's not the best man I have around me."

He paused. Wade's face was still implacable. Lincoln debated for a moment whether to dismiss him or to attempt further to reach his understanding. He decided on the latter and reaching out a long arm, pulled the bell rope by his desk.

"See if Mr. Lamon's around and send him here," he told the doorman. Then, before Wade could voice his protest, "You never met Lamon, did you?"

"I've never wished to meet the pompous fool," declared Wade.

Lincoln bit his lip but before he could remonstrate with Wade the door opened and Lamon came in.

He was at this time about thirty-five years old. He was six feet two inches tall, broad of shoulder and slim of waist, with regular features and a peculiarly noble cast of countenance. The lips under the drooping mustache were clean cut and very firm. He paused just within the threshold.

"Mr. Lamon," said Lincoln, "this is Senator Wade. I want you two gentlemen to meet each other. One time Charles Lamb pointed to a man and said, 'I hate that fellow.' Lamb's companion said, 'I thought he was a stranger to you.' 'He is,' Lamb retorted. 'That's why I can hate him.'"

Senator Wade and Marshal Lamon bowed to each other, but did not speak. The President, feeling like a schoolmaster, went on:

"What strikes me as queer, Senator, is that you whose whole life is a sacrifice to what you consider your duty should seem incapable of making allowance for the other man doing his duty with just as much of a feeling of sacrifice. Lamon is a first-class lawyer and a man of education. He didn't want to take the job of Marshal but back in 1860, my Illinois friends were convinced I'd need a true friend, close to me, one who'd guard me with his life, and cheer me and support me when I flagged. And they worked on Lamon to take the job and, thank God, he took it. What he's paid for it, nobody knows better than you, Senator."

Lamon moved uneasily. "Don't—" he began.

"I shall," interrupted the President, "do my best to make Mr. Wade see you through my eyes. If he could have had one day with us on the circuit!—I told him you were the best man I ever saw at catch-as-catch-can. Only once did you ever show scars of battle!" He laughed with remembered gayety, his face, so changed since the days of which he spoke, lighting marvelously. "One

day, Senator, during the sitting of the Circuit Court in Bloomington, Lamon wrestled at noon intermission with some fellow and got the seat of his pantaloons split. Court was called before he had time to change and he trusted that his coat was long enough to cover the accident. He had to begin a plea, immediately, and when he rose—well, the coat *wasn't* long enough. All of the lawyers were sitting round a table beneath the judge and one of them quietly started a subscription paper to buy Lamon a new pair of pants. It was passed from one lawyer to another, each putting his name down for some absurd sum—excepting myself. I wrote that I could contribute nothing to the end in view!"

He finished the story with a delighted shout in which Hill Lamon joined. Senator Wade looked from the President to his friend. "A very pleasing sample of Western wit," he murmured. "I wish you good day, *gentlemen!*" He bowed and jerked open the door into the reception room.

Lincoln wiped his spectacles and put them in his pocket. "Well, Hill, when did you return? And how is General Grant feeling?"

"I got back about an hour ago," replied Lamon, unfastening the long blue broadcloth cape he wore and dropping into a chair near the President's desk. "Grant is his usual quiet, sober self."

"Is he whipping General Thomas on to pursue Hood instead of settling in Nashville for the winter?"

"Yes, sir, he's giving Thomas no peace. I'd say he was really nagging the poor fellow. General Sherman's living high down near Savannah. They haven't got any clothes through to his troops yet but they're as fat as butter, and in spite of their rags, they're the finest, toughest, sauciest lot of fighting men I've ever seen. Sherman's

as proud of them as though he gave birth to every man Jack of 'em!"

"Good! Good! But what of the country down there, Hill? What of the plain people?"

"Well, Sherman says his soldiers live on turkey, chickens and sweet potatoes but that the poor women and children are hungry. He tells them that if Jeff Davis expects to found an empire on the ruins of the South, he ought to afford to feed the people. He tells them that it's time they realized war is cruelty and that you can't refine it."

Lincoln groaned. "Will it never end?"

Lamon shook his head. "Not till Sherman and Grant do their awful work. And the weather's so bad Grant can only strengthen his lines and make an occasional demonstration against Lee."

"Another sweat of waiting!" muttered Lincoln, "I wonder if the country can endure it? I wonder if I've got enough muscle left in my soul to back every one up."

Lamon's clear eyes met his friend's. He did not reply to Lincoln's wonderment but he said, with a little smile, "I heard of a nice thing that occurred at Grant's headquarters, last July. He saw bonfires blazing one hot night along the Rebel lines and told some one to 'holler' over and learn the reason for the celebration. It seemed that General Pickett,—you remember Pickett's charge at Gettysburg,—had just received word of the birth of his first child, a son.

"George Pickett! I know him well. I got him the appointment to West Point, the rascal, and he turned Secesh! A delightful fellow! Well! Well!"

"He was Grant's friend too, it seems, and also well liked by some of Grant's staff. When they learned the reason for the celebration they had some bonfires started

on our side and sent a note through to the Confederate lines. I made a copy for you."

With a very gentle smile he handed the President a bit of yellow copy tissue and Lincoln read, "To George Pickett! We are sending congratulations to you, to the young mother and the young recruit. Grant, Ingalls, Suckley. July 18, 1864."

"By jings!" ejaculated Lincoln.

"And to do the matter up in style," grinned Lamon, "a few days later, under a flag of truce they sent through the lines a baby's silver service, engraved, 'To George S. Pickett, Jr., from his father's friends: U. S. Grant, Rufus Ingalls, George Suckley.'"

"And those two armies locked in a death struggle!" exclaimed Lincoln. "What a war! What a war!—Young George Pickett with a son!—What a war!—Thank you for telling me, Hill. It takes some of the bitter taste out of my mouth."

"General Grant wants you to get down to City Point when you can. Also he urged on me the necessity of your being extremely careful of yourself. He says the end of the war is now only a matter of weeks and that bitterness against you, personally, is going to rise like a tide. He says you must cease to send me on these errands which keep me away for months or you must consent to a personal guard at your elbow."

Lincoln tapped the desk thoughtfully. The idea of a man dogging him was almost intolerable. But so was the constant nagging of Mary, Stanton, Lamon and now of Grant. After all, the war was nearly over and he'd be a free man again!

"Arrange what will relieve your mind, Hill," he sighed. "Only I won't have men in uniform and won't have them insult people by carrying arms openly."

"Thank God! *Thank God!* Mr. Stanton and I've

had picked men waiting months for this. I'll have one on duty in half an hour. I'm grateful to you, Mr. Lincoln."

"You dear damn' fool!" was the President's response as he threw a long arm for a moment over his friend's shoulder.

Lamon's smile was uncertain and so was his voice as he placed his dispatch box on the desk. "General Grant wishes you to read and return these, by me. I'm willing to go, *now*."

CHAPTER V

JOHN SURRATT

NOT all the men connected with the firing of New York escaped. During the weeks before Christmas several of them were arrested. While they were awaiting trial, three Sons of Liberty in Indiana were found guilty of conspiracy, insurrection and violation of the laws of war and sentenced to death. The judgment of the military tribunal which tried them could not be executed unless signed by the President. When the papers reached his desk Lincoln found himself the recipient of violent protests and pleas from relatives and friends of the men under sentence and he referred both the protests and the papers to Judge-Advocate-General Holt, who recommended death.

Death! The President, in the midst of a crowded morning, glanced at Judge Holt's close-written conclusion only long enough to absorb its purport. Legally sound, perhaps. But Abraham Lincoln, the fixed center in a whirlpool of destruction, felt his gorge rise at the thought of the power his position gave him. Why should he deal death to these men who whatever may have been their designs, had failed to kill? If he ordered them to be hanged, then inevitably he must order Jefferson Davis and his Cabinet hanged, when the end came, as it must come.

He placed the papers in his bureau and returned to a report from the Secretary of the Treasury on a proposed bond issue.

"What," asked John Hay, a few hours later, "shall we do with these petitions about the Indiana conspirators?"

"File them," replied the President. "They can't hang them until I confirm the judgment."

John Hay grinned and obeyed. "They've caught John Beall," he said as he returned to the President's desk. "That's the fellow who tried to capture the steamer *Michigan*. He was trying to derail an east-bound express train near the Suspension Bridge at Niagara. He *is* a dirty dog. He'd have killed any number of women and children."

He looked at the President keenly, but Lincoln would not commit himself beyond admitting with a nod, "Yes, he is a low-down skunk!"

"I wonder how much Jeff Davis actually knows about these filthy little contrivings?" said John.

"Mighty little, I reckon," replied Lincoln. "Of course, he appointed Jacob Thompson and the rest of the gang but—" he paused uneasily.

"And authorized the expenditure of moneys to destroy the Northern morale. Well, what more do you want to incriminate him?"

"I'd want absolute and final proof," declared Lincoln, crossly, "which we probably never will have." Then he went on casually, "I'd like to have seen those three Booth boys playing 'Julius Cæsar' that night in New York. Edwin tops the world I think. I like his voice. The other two are only middling."

"John Wilkes Booth is in Washington now," said John as he laid the final sheet of a document under Lincoln's waiting pen. "I saw him drinking at the Herndon bar, yesterday."

"I hope that means we'll have Shakespeare here too," inscribing his name with his usual unhurried care. "By the way, what were *you* doing at the Herndon bar?"

Young Hay returned the President's sly smile impudently. "Sir, I was distributing temperance tracts!"

Lincoln's hearty laugh dismissed the subject of conspiracy for the day.

Wilkes Booth, coming out of the National Hotel that morning ran upon Dr. Mudd who was hurrying along Pennsylvania Avenue.

"My dear doctor!" he cried. "You're the one man on earth for the moment! I want you to introduce me to the Surratts. You must have forgotten that you were going to put me in touch with them."

"How can I do that, at this time?" asked Mudd, coldly. He was in riding clothes, his boots clay-spattered. "I want to go change my clothes, Booth. Don't hold me, please."

"Only to make an appointment, doctor. I have Mrs. Surratt's address. They're on H Street, near 7th."

"You mean they're in Washington? I didn't know that! But at any rate, Booth, I can't accommodate you. My brother and I are here meeting friends who are going home with us for Christmas. I've no time to spare." He turned to go but came to an abrupt halt. "Ha! Luck's with you, Booth! Here comes young Surratt, now! Surratt! Come here a moment!"

A tall young man of twenty-two with a cadaverous face ornamented by a little black mustache waved his hand. "All hail, Dr. Mudd! And Christmas gift!" He shook hands and then introduced his companion, a stout youth named Louis Weichmann. "Louis went to college with me and now boards with us."

Dr. Mudd, after salutations, introduced Wilkes Booth.

"I've seen you act many times, sir," exclaimed Weichmann, "and I've always dreamed of meeting you in flesh and blood!"

"You must have seen me as Banquo's Ghost!" laughed Wilkes. "Come in here where I'm stopping and join the ghost in drinks and cigars."

"Just so the drinks are spiritual but not unreal!" volunteered John Surratt. "Louis and I are on our way to buy a Christmas present for my sister but I suppose this delay will only increase our generosity! Come along, doctor."

They followed Booth to his room where he ordered milk punches and cigars, stirred the fire to a splendid blaze and moved chairs around the hearth. The talk was general for a moment, then Dr. Mudd rose and called Booth into the hall with him. For ten minutes, the sound of their whispers reached Surratt and Weichmann. Then Mudd called Surratt out, leaving Weichmann to listen indignantly to the low murmur of a still longer conference. Finally the doctor came in briskly but apologetically.

"Too bad to leave you alone so long! Very ungentlemanly! But Mr. Booth had some private business with me. The fact is, he wants to buy my farm but doesn't want to give me enough for it."

Booth and Surratt now returned, full of apologies. Nevertheless the three continued to carry on a conversation in whispers, leaving Louis Weichmann to stare uneasily. When the discourtesy became too much to bear he rose. Dr. Mudd then ended the conference by saying:

"Come over to the Pennsylvania with me, all of you. I must attend to my guests but I want to talk to Mr. Weichmann."

Wilkes put his hand on Weichmann's arm. "Walk with me, my dear fellow, and tell me just how rude we are."

The stout young man melted and the party reached the Pennsylvania in great harmony of mind.

Dr. Mudd's room was not so comfortable as Booth's. It lacked the red window curtains and the armchairs. But there was a good fire. Neither Mudd's guests nor his

brother put in an appearance. The doctor made no comment on this fact. Perhaps he forgot it in the interest of his examination into Weichmann's politics. The young man was working in the War Department. He was a gentle-spoken fellow, of the student type, preparing to enter the priesthood, when the war should end.

He said that he wished he could get a job in Richmond for he was a Southern sympathizer. But that, of course, as long as he took Union money, he was bound to play straight with them.

"What are you referring to?" asked the doctor, abruptly.

"You asked me just what my work was in the War Department. Well, all I really know is something of the military census."

"In which I'm not interested," returned Mudd, promptly. A moment later he murmured something to Booth about "a weakling" and again the embryo priest was left to himself. After a quarter of an hour of this, Weichmann again rose. Surratt imitated him, remarking as he did so to Booth that he'd be glad to go into the cotton speculation the actor had described.

Wilkes went to bed that night highly pleased with his luck. Young Surratt had agreed to act as his agent in lower Maryland, and would begin at once to investigate the best routes for the kidnapers. Weichmann was an effeminate impossibility. Surratt, when Wilkes spoke of needing at least two more men, spoke of one David Herold, an old schoolmate living in Washington. But Wilkes clung to the idea of having an actor in the scheme, some one who would have a legitimate excuse for being on the stage, if the theater abduction came about. His mind returned to Samuel Chester and he resolved to talk to him further as he was going to New York for the holidays.

Shortly after Christmas, therefore, he called on Chester and invited him out for some drinks. They fortified themselves well in a saloon, while Booth talked of his mysterious speculation and the enormous wealth it was going to bring.

Chester, a sad-eyed man of a cynical cast of countenance spoke but once. "What are the details?" he asked after Wilkes had held forth for a half hour.

But for some time, Wilkes held back. Conglomerate as New York was of loyalty and disloyalty to the Union cause and to Abraham Lincoln, still it was more difficult to reveal his plot in this Northern atmosphere than it had been in the Southern air of Baltimore. He continued to absorb brandy, however, and in the course of a second half hour, had gathered sufficient determination to lead Chester out of the saloon and after looking up and down the street, to whisper:

"I'm in a large conspiracy of fifty to a hundred men to capture the heads of the Federal Government, including the President and to take them to Richmond. There's literally millions in it! I hope the abduction of old Abe will take place at Ford's Theater, early in January. I'll be playing there then and I want somebody to be playing with me who'll help me. See?"

"For God's sake!" exclaimed Chester, "I always feared you'd go mad, like your father! What are you trying to do? Ruin me and my family?"

"How dare you say such a thing to *me?*" shouted Wilkes, fiercely.

"I've a notion to turn you over to the authorities," retorted Chester.

Wilkes seized Chester by the coat lapels. "If you breathe it, I'll swear you *fathered* the scheme!" he said hoarsely.

Chester turned pale. Then he shook himself free.

"Don't ever mention this to me again, then," and he strode away.

Wilkes stared after him in the wintry sun which shone brilliantly on the drifted snow of 4th Street and cursed him loudly and bitterly. But Sam Chester was quickly beyond earshot. It was evident that Wilkes' method had been wrong with his fellow actor. Well, there might be some one playing in Ford's in January who would not be as stupidly difficult as Chester.

Restless and distrait during the next few days, he annoyed and worried his family, particularly his mother. She tried to beguile him into staying in New York but he insisted that his opportunities were greater in Washington and early in the New Year, he once more left his brother's house. But he did not go at once to the capital. He stopped over in Baltimore for a talk with Sam Arnold and Mike O'Laughlin. They were very impatient and faintly derisive. He met their complaints by turning over to them a trunk. It contained guns, pistols, cartridges, bowie knives and a pair of handcuffs with several false beards. The two men were to drive down to Washington bringing the trunk in a buggy Booth had purchased as well as a horse. Wilkes promised to meet them there.

CHAPTER VI

"PERCHANCE TO DREAM"

BOB LINCOLN had come home from Harvard for the holidays and his mother insisted that he take part in the New Year's reception, which was always a great strain on everybody in the White House, with the exception of Tad.

"But, mother, I wouldn't lessen the strain for you and father," Bob protested at breakfast the morning of the reception.

"Perhaps not but it'll help you to overcome your shyness and also it will feed my vanity," replied his mother. "You've grown very handsome, my son."

Lincoln gave a delighted laugh and looked from Mary to her boy. He thought Bob was the image of his mother although Mary insisted that in the last year the young man had taken on a more pronounced look of his father. The President was sincerely thankful that in all four of their sons, Mary's pretty contours had softened and beautified his own physical contributions. In Bob, the combination of Lincoln and Todd was singularly felicitous. The length of Lincoln's jaw and the hollows in his cheeks were reduced by a fining of the firm chin, a lessening of the high cheek bones, with a closer chiseling of the wide mouth. It was a charming boy's face with enough of the father's melancholy cast to give it strength.

"The fact is, mother," muttered Bob, staring at the bowl of blue hyacinths which graced the breakfast table, "I'm helping Mrs. Harlan with her reception."

His mother and father exchanged glances.

"Hum!" murmured Lincoln. "I always did dote on the name Mary. Prettiest name in the world for a woman."

Bob blushed and when Tad giggled he said fiercely, "You have the manners of a chimpanzee, Tad!"

"Now don't start a quarrel, boys!" protested their mother. "Well," thoughtfully, "I'll be satisfied with an hour of your valuable time, then."

"Thank you, mother!" Bob sighed with relief.

"He's in a soft mood and actually overcome with gratitude and surprise at your leniency, Mary!" smiled Lincoln. "You could have got two hours out of him just as easy."

Bob grinned. "Quit kicking the table-leg, Tad."

Tad raised a round face from his bowl of mush, his blue eyes indignant. "You 'tend to you' gels and I'll 'tend to my legs, Bob. Ma'y Ha'lan has got a lot of beaux besides you."

"Don't repeat gossip, Tad," his mother admonished him sharply as she rose from the table. "I do wish you'd make a real effort to pronounce your R's, my dear. You'll be twelve in April."

"Oh, let him alone, mother!" protested the President, rising also. "Come on, Tad, before they begin to abuse you."

"I don't mind a fight with Bob," returned the little boy, taking a second helping of mush.

Lincoln warmed his hands at the blazing fire for a moment, then went upstairs to his office. He was smiling not only at Tad's retort but at the thought of Bob and dear little Mary Harlan. Nothing would please him more than Bob's marrying young and marrying this daughter of Senator Harlan.

The President had a great admiration for James Har-

lan of Iowa who had been a teacher, a lawyer and a college president and possessed all the educational qualifications of which Lincoln never ceased to mourn the lack. As a member of Congress, Harlan had been harshly critical of the President many times but Lincoln was convinced that the Iowa man liked him. This was so rare a conviction for the President with regard to the feeling of any Congressman toward him that it was a very precious possession, although he had not the affection for Harlan that he had for Sumner nor could he be the friend of his heart as was Hill Lamon. Harlan had agreed that later in the spring he would take office in the Cabinet as Secretary of the Interior.

At noon, the White House was thrown open to the public and all day long, Lincoln greeted people, now with his right, now with his left hand. Different shifts of friends and officials stood in the reception line with the President and his wife during the long hours. Senator Harlan and Mrs. Harlan alternated with Secretary Welles and Mrs. Welles. Mr. Frederick Seward relieved Speaker Colfax. Any and every friend whom Lincoln could persuade to help, literally lent a hand.

Something over five thousand citizens greeted the President during the levee. People in general paid more attention to Mary than to her husband. She was very handsomely dressed in a deep purple brocade with an exquisite black lace shawl over her shoulders. She was vivacious and eager while he in very weariness could only permit his helpless fingers to be crushed by hand after hand. He insisted that Mary should not suffer this imposition but only bow her greetings.

As the day wore on the throng grew rough and it required all of Marshal Lamon's skill and strength, with the help of both the infantry and unmounted cavalry guards to steer the lines past the hosts and out at the

great window from which a gang plank led to the lawns. Late in the afternoon when the crowding was at its height and Lincoln was ready to drop with exhaustion, a voice reached him out of the medley of sounds.

"Did you bring any mail out to-day, Abe?"

He focused his gaze on the face below him—wrinkled, strangely changed and yet, he knew it. He put a hand on the old man's bent shoulder.

"Zack Simpson, by jings!"

The farmer grinned delightedly. "Yes, Mr. Lincoln and here's Allie!" pulling forward a tiny old lady whose black bonnet had been knocked askew.

Lincoln deliberately turned his back on the milling crowd, drawing the old couple around with him, while he smiled into their delighted faces.—A little field bordered by walnut trees and paw-paw thickets suddenly shut out the East Room. "Zack," said Lincoln, "is the old farm the same?"

"Just the same, sir." The watering faded eyes twinkled. "And now I'll ask you the question that's been bothering me for over thirty years. What did you do with the whetstone you took out of the shed when you mowed the ten-acre lot for me?"

Lincoln closed his eyes. That ten-acre lot which edged the creek! He spoke after a moment. "Zack, if you'll cross that field to the north-east corner you'll find the whetstone just where I left it in a crotch of one of the posts."

"I'll go home and look for it and if I find it, shall I let you know, sir?"

"Do! Do!" exclaimed Lincoln. "Thank you!" He stooped and kissed Allie's cheek and turned back to the impatient line with a smile that did not fade for a long time.

There was one other iridescent moment in the day.

This was long after when the crowd had all but disappeared and Bob, in irreproachable broadcloth, gravely approached with a slip of a girl in white silk ruffles hanging on his arm.

"Well, Mary! Sweet Mary of Argyle! Did you ever hear Lamon sing that ballad?" asked the President, bowing over the little white-gloved hand.

"Not yet, Mr. Lincoln," replied Mary Harlan, sweeping a perfect curtsey, her flounces billowing like a wind-blown daisy field.

It was curious, thought Lincoln, that her delicate features could be so reminiscent of her father's heroic mold. The same large clear eyes, the same broad brow, at least what one could see of it beneath the hair parted thick over the temples. He told himself he never had seen so sweet an expression on a woman's face.

"I've found the source of that quotation I made to you, sir, the other day," said Mary.

"The one about lilacs?" asked the President.

She nodded her head and said softly while Bob watched her, his heart in his eyes, and Lincoln listened, his face infinitely wistful:

" 'There was a child went forth every day
And the first object he looked upon, that object he became—
The early lilacs became part of this child,
And the grass and white and red morning glories—
And white and red clover and the song of the phœbe-bird.'

It's Walt Whitman's—from 'Leaves of Grass.' "

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Bob, "does your father know there's a copy of that book in his house!"

"My mother does," replied Mary demurely. "It's a great poem, Mr. Lincoln. I'll recite more of it to you on a better occasion."

The President smiled his thanks and the two having done their duty departed.

As Lincoln, several hours later, crossed the East Room to make his way toward the family staircase, he observed two of the guards and Hill Lamon in acrimonious conversation with an elegantly dressed young man whom Lincoln thought he'd seen somewhere. He was too tired to investigate at the moment but when Hill came to his office shortly Lincoln said, "Who was the fellow you were arguing with, down below? I had half a notion to tell you I'd say Howdy to him and save you trouble."

"It was one of the Booth brothers, John Wilkes," replied Lamon. "He'd been drinking heavily. I didn't want the ladies to see him. A nice fellow but he's been hanging around Washington off and on for months in idleness."

"I hear Edwin Forrest is going to play 'Richelieu,'" said Lincoln. "Booth will probably act in his company. I want to see 'Richelieu.'"

"When you go, Mr. Lincoln, don't let the date be known ahead of time. My detectives have just discovered that the organization which came into being five years ago to kidnap President Buchanan is still in existence as an apparently harmless drinking club."

Lincoln ran his fingers through his hair impatiently. "I've given Blair his permit to go down to Richmond and satisfy himself as to what kind of a peace Jeff Davis thinks he can get."

Lamon sighed. "But you will not let the date of your theater visit be known, will you, sir?"

The President shook his head. His mind had left "Richelieu" and it was less on Blair than it was on the Thirteenth Amendment which was to come before the Senate again on January 6th. He was worried lest Charles Sumner delay again its long-delayed passage by being too finicky over the wording.

"As a matter of fact," he said aloud, "it couldn't be phrased better."

"Eh?" ejaculated Lamon. "What's that?"

Lincoln said slowly,

"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude except as a punishment for crime whereof they shall have been duly convicted shall exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction. Nothing could bite closer than that. Sumner must stand aside. The old juggernaut of anti-slavery is on the final lap of its fearful journey. I advise Sumner to get aboard or to stand away from the wheels. But moving him is like trying to move an elephant by the laying on of hands."

He picked up his pen to write a note of condolence to Chief Justice Chase who had lost his sister but his mind was still ruminating with pleasure on the Amendment. "A question might be raised whether or not the Emancipation Proclamation was legally valid. But this Amendment is a king's cure-all for all the evils. It winds the whole thing up.—Well, Hill, to-morrow's Cabinet day and I've got to work till midnight going over some decisions on cotton cases Father Welles is pressing me for. Even the navy is entangled in that devilish fluff. What do you want, Hill?"

"In other words, will I nimbly remove myself," said the younger man, rising wearily from his place before the fire.

"Not till you tell me what brought you here. I can see there's something bothering you, my boy."

"There is, but you're too tired to take it up, to-night"; Lamon began to move toward the door.

"Wait, Hill! You know I never have a free moment and this is as good time as another. Out with your trouble." Lincoln laid down his pen and smiled at his friend.

Lamon bit his lip, folded his blue broadcloth arms for a moment in thought, kicked the fire with an elegantly polished boot and said in his low-pitched Virginian voice, "Well, the New York *World* is still harping on the alleged Antietam episode. It's repeated the dirty lie daily for three months and other papers are almost as bad. For heaven's sake, for your family's sake, let me deny it."

"Let's see," mused Lincoln, doing his best to clear his mind of the heavier problems, for he knew this matter concerned Lamon's reputation as well as his own. "Let's see, the theme of that particular lie is to the effect that when I was visiting the battlefield of Antietam, we made a special trip in an ambulance to see the carnage, accompanied by McClellan. That as we passed the heaps of unburied dead, I slapped you on the knee and asked you to sing 'Picayune Butler' and it was only McClellan's decency that headed you off."

"That's the original lie, but it's grown in two years." Lamon's face was flushed, painfully. "I don't care so much about myself but how can any one knowing what you endure—" He gulped and went on more calmly. "The latest addition is this bit of doggerel—

> "Abe may crack his jolly jokes
> O'er bloody fields of stricken battle
> While yet the ebbing life-tide smokes
> From men that died like butchered cattle.
> He e'er yet the guns grow cold,
> To pimps and pets may crack his stories—"

Lincoln raised a thin, protesting hand. "That's enough, Hill!" He felt nauseated, but after a moment he said, quietly. "Write down the plain facts, Hill. It was sixteen days after the battle. The dead were all buried. . . . No, there'll be too much vinegar and gall in your wording of it. I'll write it for you . . . let's see. On that drive over to review General Porter's troops, I did

ask you to sing me my sad little song. And you did sing it, but we were not on the battlefield, of course."

He pulled a sheet of paper toward him and slowly and carefully wrote the statement of facts.

Lamon read it and nodded. "They ought to be drawn and quartered. I'll mail it to the *World,* to-night."

The President took out his paper knife and rubbed his cheek, thoughtfully. "Don't do it, Hill. You and I know that this is the truth and the whole truth about that affair but I dislike to appear as an apologist for an act of mine which I know was right. Keep this paper and we'll see about it, later."

Lamon ground his teeth but Lincoln smiled at him and suddenly the Virginian's face melted.

"You promise to be sketchy about any theater date, don't you, Mr. Lincoln," he urged, again.

"Yes! Yes!" returned the President, turning to Chase's letter and glancing with a sigh at the "cotton" papers he had promised Welles for the morrow.

"You'll not go alone," insisted Lamon.

"No! No!" a little impatiently.

"Remember that we have new evidence of plots."

"Oh, that's enough!" snapped Lincoln. Then he laughed. "I'll have to use on you the story I used the other day on a man who came to get a job from me. He was armed with vouchers as to his character and I told him to read one or two to me. He started off and by jings, he'd read twenty before I could get my breath. 'Stop!' I told him finally. 'You're like the man who killed the dog. The dog was vicious and he knocked out its brains with a club. But then he continued striking the dog till a friend stayed his hand. "You needn't keep on," said the friend. "The dog was dead at the first blow." "Oh, yes, I knew that," said the dog-killer, "but I believe in punishment after death!" ' "

Hill grinned. "Did you give him the job?"

"I did, sir!"

"By the same analogy will you give me the promise?"

"I will, sir, if you'll just get out and let me set up some socks for the Cabinet to knit on."

Lamon went out, still grinning.

But Lincoln did not get on with the knitting.

He looked at his watch. It was eleven o'clock and he was tired. He finished the note to Chase, then walked over to the fire and pulled up his trouser legs in the vain endeavor to warm his shins. His vitality was not what it had been. And instantly the memory of the dream returned to him as it had for days, whenever he ceased for a moment to occupy his mind with work.

It was not, he told himself, as he eyed the fire, that he believed in dreams as such. He did not consider himself superstitious in the ordinary meaning of the word. He always had had a sense of predestination and the years at the White House had increased his conviction that he was not altogether master of his own decisions. And he had come to believe completely that the Almighty was very close to the North these days, very close to Washington, but closest of all to Abraham Lincoln who was doing his utmost to lead the righteous cause.

He did not think that ordinary dreams were of any particular significance. But, he told himself, there must be out there, beyond time and space, a reservoir of Universal Knowledge and at times of dire need surely it must be given to man to tap that reservoir. How else could the miracles of Christ be explained? And since this war was one of the great, significant events of all times, might it not be that the soul of the man who carried its overwhelming burden could in dreams slip its leash and plumb the vasty depths of pre-knowledge—of prophecy?

Was this dream that haunted him such a one? He

walked uneasily to the window by his desk. Snow was whirling down on Mary's pretty garden—God, how lonely it was. How lonely life was!—He was glad to realize that Mary would be waiting for him as usual in the sitting room. Suddenly, he plunged across the private passageway to find her.

The room was full of the fragrance of forced white lilacs from the greenhouse. A warm light from a leaping cannel coal fire gave the octagonal room with its heavy stuffed, half shabby furniture a homelike look. This was the only room in the White House of which Lincoln really was fond. Mary was not alone. She and Hill Lamon were sitting at the center table, checking over dinner lists.

"This is a nice job for a man of brawn if not of brain," remarked Lamon, making a grimace of distaste.

The President did not reply. He stood on the hearth-rug in a profound melancholy.

"What is it, Mr. Lincoln?" asked Mary, eyeing him soberly.

"Did you ever notice how much there is in the Bible about dreams?" he asked, rousing himself. "I've counted some sixteen chapters in the Old Testament and four or five in the New in which dreams are mentioned. And there are many passages scattered through the book referring to visions. If we believe in the Bible we have to believe that in the old days God and His angels made themselves known to men in dreams."

"Is it a dream that's depressing you?" asked Mary, quickly, while Lamon looked on, pen poised.

"I'm not saying I believe in the Biblical sort of dream," replied Lincoln. "But I've been having one that haunts me as if it were about as important as one of those."

Mary's blue eyes darkened with anxiety. "You

frighten me when you speak so solemnly, Abra'm. What was the dream?"

"I oughtn't to have mentioned it," he said contritely. "But somehow the thing's got possession of me and like Banquo's ghost, won't down."

"I refuse to be superstitious!" declared Mary, slapping a plump hand on the table to emphasize her independence. "But you'd better tell us the dream, my dear. A dream shared will never repeat itself."

Lincoln smiled at her.

"Tell us about it, Mr. Lincoln," urged Lamon, strolling from the table to join the President on the hearthrug.

Mary looked up at the two gigantic forms and thought of how much more of real beauty there was in her husband's expression than in the handsome Hill Lamon's.

"About ten days ago," said Lincoln, slowly, "I was so late going to bed that I fell asleep immediately and instantly, as near as I can calculate, I began to dream. First there was stillness. Then I heard subdued sobs, as if many people were crying. I thought I left my bed and wandered downstairs. There the silence was broken by the same pitiful sobbing but the mourners were invisible. I went from room to room. No living person was in sight but the mournful sounds met me wherever I went. It was light in every room and all the furniture was familiar to me. But I couldn't find the people and I was puzzled and worried. The last room I entered was the East Room. And there I found the root of the trouble. Before me was a catafalque on which rested a corpse, the face covered. Soldiers guarded it and there was a throng of people, some gazing mournfully and some weeping.

" 'Who is dead in the White House?' I asked one of the soldiers.

" 'The President,' he said. 'He was killed by an assassin.'

"Then such a loud burst of grief came from the crowd that it woke me up and I couldn't get to sleep again."

"I shouldn't think you could have!" gasped Mary, white to the lips.

Lincoln, who had been oblivious to his actual surroundings while he lived the dream again, came back to reality with a start. He looked at his wife, contritely.

"O my dear girl, I shouldn't have told you!" he exclaimed.

Mary rallied at once. "Whom should you tell if not me? And after all it's a cheering dream for it couldn't have been you on the catafalque. *You* were a bystander."

"So I was! So I was!" agreed the President, without conviction. "Well, let it go. The Lord in His own good way and time will work this out. I must get back to my work."

"Not to-night," protested Mary. "You need sleep, fearfully, my dear."

Lamon, always sensitive to Lincoln's mood, quoted softly,

"Sleep hath its own world—"

The President took up the quotation eagerly and went on for several lines:

"—A boundary between the things misnamed
Death and existence. Sleep hath its own world
And a wide realm of reality—"

Mary shook her head vigorously. "I don't call that a tactful illustration for the case in point," she protested.

"Anyhow, I feel better," insisted Lincoln. "You were right when you said a dream shared loses its horror, Mary."

"I didn't quite say that, but I'm glad it's the way you feel," said his wife, with a cheerful smile.

CHAPTER VII

SPREAD OUT!

LINCOLN kept his own counsel as to when he would make the proposed visit to the theater to see "Richelieu." But he promised himself when he awoke on the Saturday following New Year's that he'd hustle through enough work during the next ten hours to justify him in indulging himself to that extent.

He worked without pause until an hour before sunset. There never had been a busier day. It was as if every one who had the remotest interest in the war took this particular day to urge his or her cause. Petitions for pardons, for passes, for special trade dispensations, flowed in an ever-increasing flood. Members of Congress stood in his outer office in serried ranks seething with unconcealed impatience while various Cabinet members took precedence in making their demands. The tremendous crisis on the Thirteenth Amendment was pending. The Committee on the Conduct of the War was seriously displeased with Lincoln, with Stanton, with Grant and with the unregenerate Benjamin Butler. Its members consumed an hour, stinging the President like angry wasps. These were succeeded by the elder Blair, urging greater concessions for a possible peace. Stanton came in on Blair and the two became abusive of each other. This was the last straw. Lincoln suddenly threw down his pen and bolted.

He eluded his new guard who as yet was no match for the President's guile and slipped out the back way for a walk in the grounds. A heavy snowfall gave him the per-

fect privacy he craved. He made his way to Adams' Grove, which was a world apart, that afternoon; so silently remote that he might have been a boy again, wandering in the woods with his young mother. This idea pleased Lincoln and for an hour he tramped among the trees, thinking of his youth, of his mother and sister, of his early earnest absurdities, some of which made him laugh aloud and some of which brought a grunt of reminiscent mortification.

He thought more about his mother than any one else. His stepmother was dear to him but he had observed that the older he grew, the clearer and more frequent grew his memories of his own mother. With the years, her image became more vivid. And during the past year, at night, little episodes that had rested untouched by memory for nearly half a century returned to quicken his heart. Reaching the fifties, he decided, brought its own rich virtue.

The gentle though heavy fall of the snow was very soothing. He felt his nerves relax and when dusk recalled him to his whereabouts, he emerged from the trees in cheerful mood. He returned the salute of a guard at the north portico and would have passed into the house immediately had not the man broken through formalities to exclaim:

"Secretary Stanton's gone out in a carriage looking for you, Mr. Lincoln, and Marshal Lamon followed him. Everybody's been upset, sir."

"When they come back, send them to my office," said the President.

He strode into the hall where the doorman took his snow-covered coat and climbed the stairs, smiling. "This'll teach 'em not to distrust me," he told himself. "Mary won't be back for another hour so she hasn't been bothered." He laughed aloud as he settled to the gigan-

tic pile of documents John Hay brought him. He confided the joke to John who did not find it humorous and said so frankly.

"I was just going to start out myself. Mr. Stanton fired your guard, out of hand. I thought he was going to kick the poor devil downstairs."

"Oh, I'll reinstate Smith," chuckled the President. "The joke is that for once, I'm guiltless, by jings!"

John Hay gave up and with compressed lips laid a letter from one of Grant's generals before him. Lincoln continued to smile as he adjusted his spectacles and read the few lines. "Hah! do you know, John, this fellow's a philosopher and a truly great man. He's grappled with the problem, *know thyself,* and he's solved it. He's a remarkable man. The war hasn't produced another like him!"

"Mr. Lincoln, he's been a complete failure!" protested Hay.

"And he's discovered it and admits it and greatly to my relief and that of the country, he resigns! He's a great philosopher. I wish he could teach the rest of the dress parade commanders to follow his example."

They both were laughing at this sally when Secretary Stanton and Marshal Lamon burst into the office.

"Do you know I nearly shot Lamon, sir, thinking he was an assassin!" roared Stanton.

"How come?" asked the President blandly.

"How come? I was returning madly after failing to find you at the Soldiers' Home and he loomed up on horseback in the dark and commanded me to halt." Stanton glared from Lincoln to Lamon.

Lamon, pale, the snow melting from his riding cape, stood panting and speechless.

"Assassins don't work that way, Mr. Stanton," persisted Lincoln. And then he exploded in the heartiest

laugh in which he had indulged for weeks. "I was in President Adams' little grove all the time, by jings, harmless as a woodchuck!"

Hill Lamon threw up his great arms and collapsed on a sofa. "I resign!" he groaned.

"So do I!" snarled Stanton.

"I wish I could!" Lincoln gasped.

"I already have!" contributed John Hay.

Stanton hesitated for a moment, then his face relaxed and he joined the others in swelling the President's delighted Ha! Ha!

That evening, Lincoln and Hill Lamon slipped out to hear Edwin Forrest as Richelieu. They took rear seats in the gallery. Wilkes Booth, prowling about during the play saw the two tall backs silhouetted against the footlights, and leaning against the exit door watched the President's great head bent forward in charmed concentration. If Lincoln was going to do this sort of thing, the theater abduction was not to be considered further!

The attempt to kidnap the President from the White House grounds waited only on the discovery of a further accomplice, some one physically capable of actually knocking Lincoln down and out at one blow from a black-jack. Wilkes was an expert fencer but he reluctantly recognized that this skill would not serve him in a black-jack attack on a man nearly eight inches taller than himself. A cell in the Van Ness house was ready for Lincoln. A boat was moored at a lonely spot beyond the marshes on the edge of the Potomac and young Surratt had arranged to have the party taken aboard by a blockade runner used by the Confederate Secret Service. The snowfall which had followed the New Year had turned the roads south of Washington to rivers of mud, making the flight through lower Maryland temporarily impossible.

The greatest gamble in the plan, as Booth saw it, was

whether or not the President visited the War Office on the night chosen. Lincoln had been ill once or twice during the winter and it was conceivable that he might be again, to the temporary frustration of the schemers.

The actor spent Tuesday completing details. Sam Arnold and Mike O'Laughlin arrived in the morning with the trunk. He met them at the National and after giving them drinks at the hotel bar, Booth joined them in the buggy and they drove to the stable he had rented behind Ford's theater.

"The theater notion sticks, eh?" asked Mike O'Laughlin as he walked round the shed which Spangler the stage carpenter had converted into a make-shift barn.

"We can't have too many plans," replied Wilkes, driving carefully under the low roof and leaping out to eye the roan horse with pride. "I'm an efficient campaigner. If my family had only permitted me to join General Lee, I'd have been his chief of staff by now."

"And not have been obliged to go into the kidnaping business to make your reputation," jibed O'Laughlin.

"My reputation is already established, sir," said Booth haughtily.

"Don't try to be funny at Wilkes' expense, Mike," said Arnold quietly. "What's the use. Hit me! I'm bullet proof." He shivered. His delicate face was drawn. "Let's find a fire."

"Haven't you been well, Sam?" asked Wilkes, solicitously. "Jove, old man, you look like a plucked chicken! Come back to the hotel and get warm!"

"Oh, I'm very well," replied Sam, "thank you, Wilkes. But this whole business works on my nerves. I'll be glad when it's over. And this weather puts on the last touch of gloom." He shivered again.

Wilkes put his arm affectionately through Arnold's. "Come and have a drink. That's the answer."

"It is!" exclaimed Mike, enthusiastic for once.

They sat for two hours in the bar of the National, during which time John consumed a quart of brandy. He became deeply excited and very irritable but he did not raise his voice and his hand remained steady. The others, drinking very much less, watched him with admiration not untinged with uneasiness.

They went over details, studying the careful map Wilkes had made of the west half of the White House grounds and repeating his instructions for their individual jobs until they were letter perfect. Toward the end of the two hours, Wilkes began to feel sure that they could do without an additional accomplice. But Mike, in nowise brandy-inflamed as to his own or any one else's physical prowess derided the thought. Arnold told Wilkes frankly that he was talking like a whiskey hero.

Booth cursed them both, softly, but did not urge the point further. He dismissed the two with a lordly wave of the hand to the boarding house he had found for them.

He sat in thought for a while after they had left, muttering to himself and opening and closing his big white fingers. The bar-keeper watched him with the respect due a man who could carry liquor as Booth did and was a little disappointed on approaching Booth to have the young man look up at him and say in a full rich voice:

> "The ambitious youth who fired the Ephesian dome
> Outlives in fame the pious fool who reared it!"

However, Wilkes was not drunk. He rose, pulled on his gloves and walked steadily out to the front entrance where he stood wondering if Mrs. Surratt could help him find his man, if he gave up the condition he himself had imposed that the man be one of Booth's own acquaintances. As he hesitated a youth shambled by staring at him. Wilkes was accustomed to the gaping admiration

of strangers but this fellow was so intent that the actor returned his look.

He was only a youngster, but huge. He seemed as tall as Lincoln to Booth but built like a bull with a curiously steadfast gaze from deepset gray eyes. His face was beardless, white and haggard.

Booth ran down the steps. "Halloo, young Powell! What are you doing here?"

The boy's face lighted extraordinarily. "I'm called Payne now, Mr. Booth, I—I—"

"Come in and have a drink and some supper! Jove, you look perished with cold and hunger, my boy," taking him by the arm and leading him up the steps. "We'll go to my room. You're the very man I want to see!"

The young man looked utterly dazed but followed willingly. Safe in Booth's room he made for the fire.

"Take off your coat, you'll warm quicker. Never mind what you have on beneath." Wilkes firmly unbuttoned the other's threadbare overcoat.

Beneath was a soiled red flannel undershirt and blue jean pantaloons. Booth handed him a purple silk dressing gown and while the boy forced his great body into this, he ordered a substantial meal. Then he poured out a small drink of whiskey which he handed his guest saying:

"More, when your stomach's full. And while you sip it, tell me about yourself."

"I can't get over your remembering me, sir! I saw you in Ford's theater in Richmond in the spring of '61. It was the first time I'd ever been in a theater, my father being a preacher. I never dreamed a man could be like you and I made up my mind to meet you if you were to be met. I got round to the stage door, remember, sir?"

"Haven't I just proved I remember?" Booth's fine face glowed. "Such admiration as you expressed that

night is unforgettable. You told me you were only sixteen but had been in the Confederate service several months. What's happened since?"

"I was in constant fighting until after Gettysburg. I got a bad wound there and was put into the prison hospital in Baltimore. I acted as an orderly in the hospital there for a while after I got well. I—I got to care about a young lady who was working as volunteer nurse and after she left the hospital, I left too and got through the Yankee lines to ours again. But last summer I got a chance to come North with some letters for Jacob Thompson in Montreal and I took it. In fact I made several trips, via Baltimore—" He paused with a bashful grin.

"And was she kind?" asked Wilkes, smiling in return.

"She's a fine girl," was Payne's reply, given stiffly. Then he went on, "I saw you in Montreal in October, sir, talking with Mr. Clay and Mr. Thompson, and I saw you again at the Winter Garden on November 26, when you played in 'Julius Cæsar.'"

"What were you doing in New York then?" demanded Wilkes with sudden interest.

"Well, I had undertaken to help burn New York. But I lost the directions Col. Martin had given me and I got scared to think I'd handed a rope to hang me on to any one who picked them up, though they were not addressed. So I went back to Baltimore and stayed at the boarding house my girl's folks keep and took the oath of allegiance."

"But was that wise?" exclaimed Booth.

"I don't know," with sudden sullenness, "I'm always in trouble. While I was waiting for further orders, and mighty sick of hanging round in my room, a sassy nigger wench refused to sweep my floor and I handed her the knock over the head she deserved. But instead of taking

it as she would have before the old bastard Lincoln got busy, she set up a howl, rushed out of the house and got me hauled before the Provost-Marshal. He ordered me to leave Baltimore. So here I am. I reckon the best thing for me to do is to get back to Richmond."

"And leave your girl? There's no necessity for that, my boy!" exclaimed Booth. "I remember all about you now. You told me, in Richmond, that your name is Lewis Payne Powell and that your father is a minister in Florida. You had two older brothers in the army."

"They've both been killed!" with quick ferocity. "By God, I hate war! Seems as if there never had been anything but stinking battlefields in my life! And now the South's licked, what's going to become of us all? When Grant's and Sherman's armies meet, there won't be a white man left living that's ever owned a slave or fought against freeing 'em."

The supper came in now and Wilkes tactfully went to his desk and wrote a letter or two while his guest devoured oysters and a beefsteak. He did not speak until Payne pushed himself away from the table and said:

"Well, Mr. Booth, I reckon you saved my life and I wish I could do something in return."

Wilkes turned quickly in his chair. "Sit down, Lewis and hear my tale."

Payne dropped into a chair before the fire and the actor walked over to stand with an elbow on the mantel. The firelight lighted his face into angelic beauty. Twilight was closing in. A servant drew the red curtains over the windows and removed the supper tray.

"Lewis," said Wilkes softly, "I am a man ordained! A man consecrated to a supreme act that will save the Confederacy! When you passed the hotel, I was racking my brains to find a man to help me. And you—you came! Like an answer to prayer, Lewis!"

The quick blood mounted to young Payne's forehead. "I'll help you, sir, though I don't see what anybody can do now for the Confederacy!"

"I'll tell you what's going to save her. I propose to kidnap Abe Lincoln and hold him in prison in Richmond until first, all our men are freed from the hell holes known as Northern prisons and second, until peace is made on President Davis' terms. Then we'll return the old gorilla to the White House."

Payne scowled thoughtfully into the fire. "It's a good idea," he said slowly. "I've heard a lot of folks scheme about it. Of course, if we fail, they'll shoot us, some fine sunrise, and from their point of view, we'll deserve to be shot."

"From their point of view, yes. But the Ruler of all nations won't condemn us nor will history. Ours will be as great a blow for freedom as the Magna Charta. Of course, I realize we must face the dangers. They are stupendous just in the degree that the game we play is stupendous."

"Well," mused the boy. "I've been through three years of war so I can't say that the dangers in this rock my foundations. The point for me, sir," he looked up at Wilkes shyly, "the point for me is that *you* ask my help. I'm with you, whatever you want."

Booth held out his hand, his eyes soft with sudden tears. "You unman me, Lewis!—Is your strength much depleted?"

Payne grinned boyishly. He jerked off the lounging robe and rolled up a flannel shirt sleeve, displaying an arm muscled, Booth delightedly exclaimed, like a strong man's in a side show.

"All I need," declared Payne, "is twenty-four hours of rest and food."

"That you shall have, and some clothing," nodded

Wilkes. "I'll find you a room in a boarding house where you can pose as a sick man, and two days from now, we'll tackle the job. I'm afraid after the loss of Col. Martin's memoranda to you, you may be a marked man, so you must be reconciled to remaining more or less hidden."

Within an hour, Lewis Payne Powell was asleep in a comfortable room, a short distance from Booth's hotel.

When he left his new recruit, Booth strolled up to the White House grounds for a last rehearsal of his plans.

Stanton had done what he could to safeguard the President. A company of Pennsylvania infantrymen camped to the south of the White House. From this company were drawn the two guards who paced innocently the length of the front of the building. In a barracks located on 15th Street, south of the Treasury grounds, were the barracks of the Union Light Guard, which company furnished the cavalrymen at the north gates. If he timed the abduction to elude notice by the infantryman on the west side of the front portico, Booth did not believe there would be the least danger from the two companies south of the White House.

He passed the cavalryman at the gate, walking briskly and slipped quickly to the right, toward Adams' Grove, meeting no one. Half way between the turnstile which let into the War Office yard and the west end of the White House a large clump of laurels grew against the garden wall. The bricked path made a slight curve around the clump. Here Booth planned to hide, with Lewis Payne. On the other side of the wall, O'Laughlin and Arnold would crouch. The moment they heard Booth's signal they would climb to the top of the wall, help hoist over the President, senseless, roped and gagged and the four would then carry him across the vegetable garden to 17th Street where Surratt with the buggy would

be waiting to bear him to the Van Ness house. Booth, groping in the black shadows, went through the abduction in pantomime. It was perfectly feasible, he was sure—if old Abe went to the War Department.

It rained for the next two days but the weather changed during the second afternoon and by dark, it was freezing. The White House lawns were first spongy, then hard to the foot. When the conspirators crept to their places at eleven o'clock it was starlight and very cold and it seemed a very long hour of waiting before the turnstile creaked and footsteps sounded. In a moment, Booth and Payne saw the tall, shadowy form, but accompanied by a lesser figure. Well, thought Booth, they were prepared for that. Lewis would knock out old Abe while he would use his lead pipe on the stranger.

"By jings, it's freezing harder than ever," came the President's slow, soft voice. "Look, Major, this brick path acts like a dug canal. There were three inches of water in it, last night, and now there must be a quarter of an inch of ice. But it's a Tad-size crick, not ours, Eckert. Spread out! Spread out! It's deeper there by the bushes and we'll go through!" He laughed and with mock heroism in his voice and gesture, pulled the Major quickly clear of the laurel shrub and rushed him rapidly out into the open lawn, in clear view of the sentry now standing watchfully at the west end of his beat.

"Spread out!" Lincoln laughed and his words came clearly to Booth and Payne on the still air. "When I was a boy, Eckert, in Indiana, we had to go seven miles to the grist mill, carrying the bag of corn on the horse's back along with the boy of the family. I remember joining up with a group of neighbors in just such weather as this and coming to the crick that ran the mill, we all crowded out on the ice. It began to crack and some fellow yelled, 'Spread out or we'll all go through!' We

scattered like dried leaves and sure enough the ice held. I've thought of that a good many times in this war. You know that man—" He lifted his hat to the sentry's salute and lowered his voice confidentially as he passed on.

An hour later, the conspirators gathered in Booth's room at the National and attacked an oyster supper. Wilkes walked the floor, cursing his luck. O'Laughlin watched him sardonically; Arnold, anxiously; Lewis Payne, with sympathy, his eyes those of a faithful setter. John Surratt made a great show of consulting a road map.

"I told you fellows the theater idea was the only one," Booth declared, finally, tossing his pistol to the bed and pouring a drink of brandy. His eyes were bloodshot, his hair disordered. "Boldness and openness are the only keys to success in this venture. I hate this skulking behind bushes."

"Booth, it's the one feasible method," contradicted Arnold who had taken enough liquor to ruffle his usual serenity. "We'll give the old brick wall another trial."

"No, we sure Gawd won't," drawled Lewis Payne. "I know my luck and my luck'll never be good against Abe Lincoln's when his is like what it was to-night." He sipped at rum and water, shaking his head knowingly. The new blue coat and fawn-colored trousers with which Wilkes had outfitted him made a different being of him, showed to the full what a splendid young animal he was.

"So I say, Lewis!" cried Booth. "If ever a man had a charmed circle drawn round him, it was old Abe, this evening."

"It sure was a warning," agreed Payne. "If you-all want my help, it'll have to be on a new deal."

"Well, something's got to be done soon or I can be

counted out," declared Sam Arnold. "My folks are fussing because I don't get a job."

"Come now, boys, I've tried out your plan," pleaded Wilkes in his most winning manner. "Give mine a try. Lincoln doesn't live at the Soldiers' Home in winter as you very well know. Let's snatch him out of Ford's while Forrest's playing."

"How can you carry out that scheme until the roads in Maryland are good?" demanded young Surratt who had continued to study his map during the entire conversation. "And I haven't found a satisfactory way of crossing at Port Tobacco yet. It'll take money."

"I'll give you the money! How much?" exclaimed Wilkes, drawing out his pocketbook.

"I'll want at least a hundred to stir some one's imagination," replied Surratt.

Wilkes peeled off several bills and threw them on the map. O'Laughlin made a gesture toward the money and when Surratt laughingly pushed him back, he closed his eyes and began to snore. No one troubled to find out whether he was clowning or in a drunken coma.

"Now then," said Wilkes, "you take a few days off your job, Surratt, go down to Port Tobacco and fix things there." He then gave Arnold a fifty-dollar bill and thrust one into O'Laughlin's coat pocket. "Will you all agree to give either the Ford or the Soldiers' Home plan next chance, depending on whichever place Abe first favors with his presence?"

Surratt, Arnold and Payne nodded.

"All right. I'll keep you informed," said Booth. "Lewis, you help Sam to take O'Laughlin home."

"Don't need any help," mumbled Mike and he walked out of the room.

And thus the conference ended.

Four days later, John Surratt, mud-spattered from

head to foot, rode at a quick trot up to the door of his mother's house on H Street and within found Wilkes Booth and his mother awaiting him. He reported that two members of the Confederate Secret Service, a man and later a woman, would stop at the house on their way to Canada. He also reported that he had found not only a boat for Booth but an enthusiastic assistant.

At Port Tobacco, he had been directed to a coach painter named George Atzerodt, as a man through whom a skiff could be found. Atzerodt was a blockade runner of the row-boat status. Surratt described him as about thirty-three, a short, thick, stooping man, with a receding chin, partially covered by a curly light beard. He was a good-natured country lout with a reputation as a clown, very ardent in the Southern cause and still more ardent when he received fifty dollars over and above the price of the boat. He had agreed to come up to Washington to meet Booth at Surratt's house. Surratt also had arranged for relays of horses and said that if the weather held good, roads would be passable in two days' time.

The plan now waited entirely on Lincoln's movements. It was announced that he would attend a play at Ford's on the 18th of January.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SAD LITTLE SONG

ON the morning of the 18th of January, Lincoln yielded, after deliberation, to the importunings of the elder Blair to be permitted to go to Richmond to see how Jefferson Davis was feeling about peace. The President had no intention of agreeing to peace except on his own terms but the pressure on him by the war-weary North was all but intolerable. It would be a relief to make a gesture toward peace even though he was sure it would be futile. He was very cautious, however, admonishing Blair over and over not to raise false hopes in Davis' breast. He made Blair take with him a letter, which he wrote while the veteran newspaper man waited.

"F. P. Blair, Esq. Sir: You having shown me Mr. Davis' letter to you of the 12th instant, you may say to him that I have constantly been, am now and shall continue ready to receive any agent whom he or any other influential person now resisting the national authority may informally send to me with the view of securing peace to our common country."

He took an hour to the writing of this note. When he had made a fair copy and passed it to Blair, the old man rubbed his bearded chin. "That's so diplomatic it says nothing at all!" he exclaimed angrily. "You mustn't be—"

Lincoln interrupted gently as he took off his spectacles, "I know you're dissatisfied, old friend, which pains me very much. But I wish not to be argued with further."

Blair rose, thrust the letter into his breast pocket, bowed and went out.

Bob's sleek dark head instantly obtruded itself through the door to the secretary's office. He had finished his course at Harvard and was awaiting his mother's approval of his joining Grant's army.

"Father," he said, hurriedly, "Mother's going to a tea fight, this afternoon. Mary Harlan and I want to know if we may ride with you in mother's place."

Lincoln smiled delightedly. "Any particular spot she wants to take us, Bob?"

"I didn't ask her, sir!" admitted the boy, blushing.

"So tickled at the idea, forgot everything else, eh? All right, my son, I accept with pleasure. Perhaps she'll want to go to the theater with us this evening?"

"I'll ask. Thanks, father!" The sleek head disappeared and Lincoln turned back to his desk, still smiling.

The day's rush engulfed him then and he did not think again of his unusual invitation until Bob appeared at four o'clock clad in his new fawn-colored broadcloth overcoat, with a gardenia in the buttonhole. He came in, adroitly, just as a committee of Quakers departed, rushed over to his father and seizing the President's hand dragged him at top speed into the sitting room.

"I told your doorman to give me one minute and I'd capture you, father! I also told Nurse-maid Crook that you'd emerge from this room and not the office. Mary is sitting in the carriage and the cavalry guard paws the driveway!"

"Everything's at the church, in other words, except the bridegroom," exclaimed Lincoln, allowing Bob to tool him rapidly through the rooms that separated the sitting room from his own quarters. "I put on my best overcoat, I suppose, sacred to funerals and parades, but I draw the line at a gardenia."

"That's all right! Yours is a camellia, sir." Bob

grinned and held up his father's overcoat, the flower already in the buttonhole.

Lincoln laughed and pulling on his gloves followed Bob into the hall where William Crook, one of the bodyguards selected by Lamon, awaited them. "Coming to the wedding, Crook?" asked the President as they hurried down the private stairway, after Bob.

The young guard nodded. "I guess I'll have to, Mr. Lincoln, or never face Marshal Lamon again!"

When they reached the carriage, Crook mounted beside the coachman. The President seated himself beside Mary Harlan, with Bob opposite, but as the carriage started he insisted on changing places with his son. He enjoyed looking at the two young faces.

"Where are we going, Mary Harlan?" asked Lincoln. "That's another new bonnet, isn't it? The last one I saw you in was purple."

"Not purple, lavender, sir," replied Mary Harlan. "What color would you call this one?"

Lincoln considered gravely not only the little velvet head-covering but the charming, delicate face beneath it. Then he said, "I'd say the color was pink and white."

"Wrong!" cried Bob. "It's buttercup yellow."

"Some one told you!" protested Lincoln. "And a woman at that! No regular man ever thought of such a name. Where are we headed, my dear?"

"Well, Mr. Lincoln, some of my friends are preparing a benefit entertainment for the Soldiers' Home Hospital. They have a dress rehearsal this afternoon at one of the houses and I thought you'd like to see it because you probably couldn't officially attend the actual performance. I won't tell you the name of the family to whose house we're going so you won't be embarrassed by introductions. You shall just slip in and out as informally as if you were back in Springfield."

"What is the performance?" asked the President, a little uneasily.

"The singing of Scotch, English and Irish ballads in costume."

"Oh, bless you!" exclaimed Lincoln with delight. "How did you know those were my favorites of all forms of music?"

"We all know it," replied the young girl demurely. "Any one who's watched your face when Marshal Lamon sings 'Sweet Alice, Ben Bolt' couldn't avoid knowing it."

"My sad little song! Yes! Yes!" He leaned back and let his long body relax.

The young people, content only to be together and with precocious sympathy for his weariness, did not speak until the carriage halted before a snowy lawn beyond which stood a white frame house with porch of Georgian pillars. It was a small house and unpretentious.

Lincoln, on emerging from the carriage, said to the coachman and the captain of the cavalry guard, "You fellows disappear for one hour, I don't want to notify Washington that I'm here. Crook, I reckon you'll have to come along."

Mary Harlan gathered up her ruffles and led the way up the path and into a little cold hall that smelled of baked apples. "Hang up your coats, here," she ordered. When they had obeyed, she opened the door into a parlor, which was so like the parlor of the Lincolns' house in Springfield that the President gasped; the same, long, low room, with rosewood and horsehair furniture, and the same indefinable air of homely elegance that Mary Lincoln had achieved in her own house.

A dozen young men and women were variously occupied in the room. A gray-haired lady sewed at a window. All rose as Lincoln entered but sat down immediately at Mary Harlan's gesture.

"Well, here we are!" she said gayly. "I hope we're not late."

"They are just having the preliminary skirmish over what number shall be first," said the gray-haired woman, her cheeks flushing as she looked at the President. "Will you sit here by the window, sir, or by the fire."

"By the fire, madam, if you don't mind," replied Lincoln, sinking into a familiar-looking rocking chair.

"Bob, you come over here to the piano and turn music," ordered a red-haired girl in a Scotch costume.

Bob fell over a footstool in his haste to obey. Some one struck preliminary chords and the red-haired girl in a soft contralto began to sing,

> "I heard them lilting at our ewe-milking,
> Lasses a-lilting before dawn o' day;—"

For an hour, no one gave heed to Lincoln save to glance with young awe, not untouched by pity, at the tragic head resting against the cross-stitched antimacassar. It was an hour of unalloyed pleasure for Lincoln. The simple homeliness and pathos of the ballads precisely suited him. He did not permit himself to think but gave his mind utterly to the music and to watching the young people and their charming dresses. A young shepherd sang in a sweet, high tenor, "O come with me and be my love!" A Highland chief lamented "I wish I were where Helen lies!" and a youngster whose voice had not yet changed warbled from beneath a white wig, "I remember, I remember, the house where I was born," bringing a smile to accompany the tears in Lincoln's eyes. Many of the songs he never had heard before. Of these he particularly enjoyed Shelley's perfect "Invocation to Night." He asked that this be repeated and wrote down the title. At the end of the program he wondered, he said, why no one had sung "Sweet Alice, Ben Bolt," and

his gray-haired hostess, with a smile, displaced the young man at the piano, then to her own accompaniment and in a soft rich soprano, she gave him the "sad little song."

Perhaps, when the rehearsal was over, they would have gathered around him had Mary Harlan not led him instantly into the hall, permitting him to call only a general Good-by!

"They aren't going to be allowed to trouble you," she said stoutly, as Bob helped her with her cloak. "That was the bargain they made with me, that you'd be merely a neighbor dropping in."

"Well," sighed Lincoln, "I can only pay you the highest tribute in my power. You're rightly named Mary."

He drew her hand through his arm and led her down the steps, Bob following.

It was dark when they reached the White House. Bob retained the carriage to take Mary Harlan home. Lincoln stood for a moment with the carriage door open looking at the two. "Thank you both," he said. "And it just occurs to me that I've missed the farewell visit of the British Minister."

Hill Lamon came bareheaded into the portico. "Mr. Lincoln," he said in a low voice, "I hope the rumor isn't true that you're going to Ford's theater to-night. You've forgotten your promise to me."

"Jings, so I did!" exclaimed the President. "But anyhow—"

"Anyhow, sir," said Lamon, firmly, "Lord Lyons called to say farewell to you and is returning this evening informally, if you are willing. John Hay made the engagement positive."

"But, anyhow," Lincoln repeated, "I wouldn't want Forrest after my hour this afternoon. You children go in my place with some of your friends."

"No, we'll wait until you are able to go!" exclaimed Mary Harlan.

"Look here," protested Bob, energetically, "I thought it was I who is said by the papers to be paying you marked attentions, Mary Harlan."

"The next item will be a true one," laughed the girl, "to the effect that two Marys are paying marked attentions to your father!"

Lincoln laughed heartily, closed the carriage door and went arm in arm up the stairs with Hill Lamon.

At seven o'clock that evening Wilkes Booth placed each member of his gang in a rehearsed position at Ford's theater. The horses were hitched to the buggy and held ready in the alleyway by Spangler.

At ten o'clock, Booth rushed out of the theater and took a train for New York, where he remained for a month. The flame of his hate was fanned while there by the trial of John Y. Beall. Wilkes knew the unsuccessful hero of the steamer *Michigan* fiasco and was full of a furious sympathy for him in his misfortune.

Lincoln also was seriously perturbed over Beall but from a different angle. The whole country watched the trial. There could be no doubt that Beall was a spy and for that cause alone merited the fate of the spy, just as Richard Montgomery would deserve hanging by the Rebels if they caught him. But Montgomery was a spy, only. Beall, on the other hand, had been carrying on a guerilla warfare such as was "condemned by the common judgment and the common conscience of all civilized states except when done in open warfare by avowed enemies" as General Dix said in his report.

Notwithstanding that Beall's guilt was beyond doubt, a tremendous effort, North and South was made to save him. A manifesto from Jefferson Davis was produced assuming responsibility for Beall's acts and declaring that

they were done by his authority. But as the trial proceeded it was obvious that the manifesto did not help Beall. For as again Dix pointed out, even if Davis had been at the head of an independent government, recognized as such by other nations, he would have no power to sanction what the usage of civilized states had condemned.

As it became obvious that Beall would be condemned to death, pressure was brought to bear on Lincoln to show executive clemency. He was visited by a large delegation of influential New Yorkers. Orville O. Browning of Illinois was retained by Beall's friends and he prepared a petition begging for a reprieve, which was signed by ninety-seven Congressmen. Lincoln placed the imposing document on his desk and made no comment for several days. James A. Garfield called and spoke of Beall's distinguished family and of the fine effect the President's reprieve would have on the South. The librarian of Congress, the president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railway, Thaddeus Stevens, Governor Andrews of Massachusetts, the older and the younger Blair, were among the many who made Lincoln's hours wretched as the date of Beall's hanging approached. Finally, when Beall's counsel, James T. Brady, who had served without conpensation called, Lincoln sent word to him that the case was closed and that he would not see the lawyer.

The night before the execution, John W. Forney and Washington McClean, two distinguished newspaper editors, called. They were accompanied by Confederate Major-General Pryor who was a prisoner and for whom they wanted a parole. The President was cordial and granted the parole but scarcely had he done so when Forney asked leniency for Beall.

Lincoln grunted but said nothing until Pryor had fin-

ished enlarging on the grandeurs of Beall's social standing. Then he said his last word on the case.

"Here is a telegram from General Dix. I procured six days' reprieve but no more for Beall. Dix says that Beall's execution is necessary for the safety of the community. That is true. I can and frequently do save the man who sleeps at sentry post, or the deserter, but the man who tries to murder women and children, the derailer of trains, the pirate, the robber with intent to kill who when caught tries to excuse himself because he says he is a gentleman, whatever that means, no! Nor do I intend to permit Jefferson Davis to give his bastard government a name and place in society, by this method. The case for John Y. Beall is closed, my friends, and may God have mercy on his soul."

He looked like a block of granite and he felt like one. There was, after all, a foundation of rock on which his tenderness toward his fellows was built. Beall had touched that foundation.

He went to bed that night exhausted, body and soul.

CHAPTER IX

EVIL FANTASIES

ON the 31st of January, Lincoln sent William Seward, to Fortress Monroe. He was to meet there a Confederate commission in a conference which was an outgrowth of Blair's visit to Richmond. He had little faith in any vital movement toward peace developing from the meeting and, after he had sped Seward, he turned his attention to the titanic struggle which that day was taking place in the House of Representatives. The final vote on the Thirteenth Amendment was imminent.

The galleries of the House were crowded with women as well as men. The streets were full of people. A restless multitude moved about the capitol grounds. Telegraph lines were cleared of war news, in readiness to speed the stupendous Yea or Nay across the continent. In every town and village in the North folk waited for the word.

All during the morning debate, it looked as if the pro-slavery party would succeed again in blocking the measure. There were the usual pleas for postponement, for amendments and for substitutes. But finally a vote was forced by the Republicans and the roll call began. The clerk read each name clearly and impressively. Members and visitors on the floor and in the galleries kept tally on old envelopes or in note books. As each member voted, word was passed by those crowding the doors to those less fortunate in the halls, and those in the halls called the votes to the eager throng outside. Even the Radicals

had little hope for a majority for the measure. And so when, one by one, Democrats who for years had fought the Amendment, sadly recognized the handwriting on the wall and voted Aye, applause swept the floor and the gallery and ran like an ever-spreading ripple out of the capitol and into the streets and up the streets to the White House, where Lincoln sat waiting.

When all other names had been called, the Speaker, Schuyler Colfax, asked the clerk to call his. There was a breathless hush as he stood up, his blond face working and answered, Aye!

The Thirteenth Amendment had passed.

The crowded room went mad. Men wept and hugged each other. Women clapped and cried and swept unhindered onto the floor to embrace the men who had pushed the great resolution through. The pandemonium spread to the streets. A salute of guns shook the city. A huzzaing mob surged into the White House grounds and Lincoln spoke to them from the familiar window.

". . . The occasion is one of congratulation to the country and to the whole world. But there is a task yet before us—to go forward and have consummated by the votes of the States that which Congress has begun so nobly. I have the honor to inform you that Illinois has today done the work. Maryland is about half way through but I feel proud that Illinois is a little ahead. I wish the reunion of all the States perfected and so effected as to remove all causes of disturbance in the future. To attain this end it was necessary that the original disturbing cause should be if possible rooted out. This amendment is a king's cure-all. It winds the whole thing up. I repeat, it is the fitting if not the indispensable adjunct to the consummation of the great game we are playing. I can but congratulate all who are present—myself, the country, the whole world—upon this great moral victory."

John Surratt was in the crowd on the White House lawn. He wrote Booth that night and described the

rejoicing in Washington. "Old Abe gloated like a monkey over a stick of candy that at last he'd ruined the Confederacy. I'm coming up to New York to see you." He followed close on the heels of his letter.

Wilkes, unable to settle to his work, restless, unhappy, suffering with the South as she watched Sherman dismember the eastern Confederacy, tear out her very heart with fire and sword, needed only Surratt's letter and visit to rouse his dormant purpose. He returned to Washington.

O'Laughlin and Arnold were working at odd jobs in Baltimore. George Atzerodt had come up from Port Tobacco and had established himself on the friendliest social relations with the Surratts. Lewis Payne was keeping to himself in his boarding house, living on the money with which Booth had supplied him. He called occasionally on Mrs. Surratt. And Wilkes too looked up this passionate friend of the South as soon as he was established at the National.

His first move was to make another effort to find an actor to aid him on the stage. He learned that an old friend, John Matthews, was playing with the Ford Theater Stock Company. Wilkes went to call on him. Matthews was living in the Peterson house across the street from Ford's. His was the hall bedroom on the first floor. He greeted Wilkes pleasantly enough but his caller scarcely had divulged the first words of his plot when Matthews cursed him, adding:

"And get out of here and stay out!"

Wilkes looked at him contemptuously. "You're a damned coward and not fit to live!" he growled and stalked from the room.

The next day, Booth invited David Herold to come into the conspiracy. David was a Washington boy whose father, recently dead, had been chief clerk of the Navy

Yard stores and a staunch Union man. His son, at nineteen was an idle, amiable lad, spoiled by his mother and sisters. He was charmed beyond expression by Booth's personality and flattered by his attention. He accepted the invitation without question.

Before the North at large got the news, Wilkes learned through the Surratts that Lincoln's and Seward's visit to Hampton Roads had failed to bring even an armistice. He was more convinced than ever that the salvation of the Confederacy lay in his hands.

He was unwearying in his efforts to get a part in a play at Ford's, but it was not until the 1st of March that he received the promise of one. And that was for the 18th, when a benefit performance was to be given for John McCullough. There was nothing to do but wait for chance to apprise him of some prospective move of Lincoln of which he could take advantage. Wilkes was untiring in his watchfulness of the President. He encouraged Payne to prowl at night in the White House grounds. On the day of the Inauguration, he went with Dr. Mudd to witness the ceremonies.

"I'll bet I can get within ten feet of the old dog!" boasted Booth as they stood in the rain before the platform. "Close enough to kill him."

"If you try anything here, Mr. Booth," whispered the doctor, "this crowd will tear you to pieces with bare hands."

"I don't know what fear is!" declared Wilkes.

He slipped away from Mudd and made his way into the rotunda of the capitol building. There he began to worm his way to the entrance which gave onto the platform. He actually reached the door and could see Lincoln's bare head. Then a guard seized him. Maddened by what he characterized as an affront, Wilkes struck the man. Another guard appeared. The people gathered

about bade the disturber be silent. The guards dragged Wilkes away, threatening him with arrest.

"Aw, he's only drunk, the bum!" exclaimed one of the guards.

"I don't like his kind of drunk. It's fed on brandy," grunted the other, sniffing insolently at Booth.

But he contented himself with pushing Wilkes violently from the basement entrance. By the time the actor had joined Mudd again, the brief ceremonies were ended.

He attended the reception at the White House that evening but could not bring himself to greet the President. He stood with folded arms at the north end of the East Room observing with malicious disgust the vandalism of memento-seekers. He saw them cut pieces from the couches and chairs and even from the carpet and wondered if such a people were worth the sacrifice he was about to make!

He attended the ball on March 6th with no clean-cut purpose save that of adding to his hate by another glimpse of the President. He saw Bob Lincoln, resplendent in a captain's uniform, with lovely little Mary Harlan on his arm. But to his chagrin he learned that Lincoln had stayed but a short time, leaving before Booth's arrival.

Handsome young John McCullough now arrived in Washington and claimed some of Wilkes' restless attentions. Wilkes wondered if McCullough might not be worked into the scheme and tested him out accordingly. He insisted that McCullough view the sights of Washington on horseback with him.

"I'm no horseback rider, old man!" protested McCullough.

But Wilkes was insistent and McCullough, who was familiar with Booth's uneasy habit of mind and his love of physical excitement, at last humored him. However,

Wilkes did not take him around Washington. He led him instead on a long and tedious trip over the various by-roads along the Eastern Branch that could be reached via the Navy Yard Bridge.

"For heaven's sake! What is there to these mud traps?" protested McCullough.

"Well, you see, Johnny," replied Booth, "if a fellow was in a tight fix, he could slip out of Washington this way."

"When I leave Washington," cried McCullough, "I shall leave on the cars. I'm all raw now with riding this old horse. For God's sake, take me back to the hotel! And don't talk nonsense to me. I'm not expecting a Booth to have to leave Washington by stealth."

His tone discouraged Wilkes and he went no further toward taking his fellow actor into his confidence. A few days later when McCullough, as was his wont, walked without knocking into Wilkes' room he found him seated at a table on which were a map, a knife and pistols. He had gauntlet gloves on his hands, spurs on his boots and a military slouch hat on his head. As McCullough stepped in, Booth seized the knife and sprang at him.

"What in the name of sense is the matter with you, Booth?" demanded McCullough. "Are you crazy?"

Wilkes rubbed his eyes and laughed sheepishly and the matter passed as a joke. McCullough saw that he'd been drinking.

Not until the 15th of March, did any definite word of Lincoln's movements reach Wilkes. Very late that evening, he read in the newspapers that a play, "Still Waters Run Deep" was to be given at the Soldiers' Home on the 18th and that in the afternoon, the President would attend. He at once sent Atzerodt who had become a sort of valet to him to round up all the conspirators and fetch them to the National.

By midnight all were in Booth's room, including Arnold and O'Laughlin who had come to Washington several days before to be drilled for the possible great dénouement on the 18th. Wilkes had provided their favorite oyster supper. There was a box of cigars as well as brandy and whiskey. On a side table were laid carbines, bowie knives, false beards, handcuffs and pistols.

Wilkes welcomed them all with warm hospitality. "Fall to, gentlemen, fall to!" he cried as the last man entered. He began at once to ladle out oysters in generous portions and insisted that they eat and drink well before getting down to serious business.

It was well on toward one o'clock when he rose in his place and rapped on the table.

"A new opportunity has come to hand, friends," he said. "But first, I shall review the plan for the 18th just to be sure there is no fundamental change necessary." He read from a slip of paper. "John Wilkes Booth playing Piscara in the Apostate. Atzerodt and Herold will turn off the gas all over the theater. Payne and Arnold will enter the President's box and knock him senseless, then throw him down to me on the stage where O'Laughlin will join me in dragging him out to the alley. Here Surratt will be waiting with the buggy, in which we will throw old Abe, I gagging and tying him while Surratt drives like lightning over the bridge to Maryland. The rest of you will follow, discreetly but rapidly, on horseback. So much for that. Are there any suggestions?"

"Good God, Wilkes!" grunted O'Laughlin. "When you read it out like that it sounds like a crazy nightmare."

"I don't want to throw cold water," said John Surratt, sipping whiskey and water to cover a real anxiety, "but

I learned this evening through a friend in the War Department that our plot is suspected up there."

"Nonsense!" cried Wilkes. "Of course, there's danger to all of us. We face that and glory in it. What are you, cowards?"

"Don't call names, Booth!" sneered O'Laughlin. "You're in no position to do so. You've been all promise and no performance so far and the thing's dragged on, a muddle-headed farce, for months. As near as I can see, the Richmond authorities will have no further use for old Abe after another month."

"Ah, won't they? Won't they?" Booth set down his empty glass. "They'll thank us on their bended knees for giving them means for dictating the terms of peace."

"I'm out of it," said Arnold, rising suddenly, his face flushed.

"Sit down! You ought to be shot!" snarled Booth.

Arnold gave him a cold, fearless stare. "Two can play at that game, sir!"

"Don't quarrel, don't!" drawled young Payne.

Sam Arnold swallowed, then said carefully, "Well, let's take a vacation. Suspicion rests on me, I tell you. Not only from my family but the neighbors. I've got to leave home and this part of the country."

"You don't want the money?" demanded Booth, excitedly.

"Money! Money! Why, I'm as you might say in rags. You've never fulfilled your promise about the cash and I'm sick of depending on you. You're really most inconsiderate as a boss, Wilkes. I'm not trying to insult you. I was one with you at first, but nothing happens and I can't live this way."

"Just what do you mean?" asked Atzerodt who had sat silently staring from Booth to Arnold, an unchanging grin on his bearded lips.

"It means Sam Arnold is a traitor!" cried Wilkes. "Wait!" as Sam raised his fist. "Wait! Let me explain again what the facts are that make me undertake to capture Abe Lincoln."

O'Laughlin shouted suddenly, "If you lecture, I lecture, brother Piscara."

"Hell, let's play poker while everybody cools down!" suggested Atzerodt.

"I've got a deck of cards," said David Herold, eagerly.

"Cards! Listen to me!" shouted Wilkes. "You've given me no opportunity to tell you of the new turn of events." He then told them of Lincoln's prospective visit to the Soldiers' Home.

But Arnold, O'Laughlin and Surratt were out of hand now and although they listened to the latest scheme, they would agree to nothing and left the room. It was five o'clock before the others departed.

The details of that conference were clear in nobody's mind the next day for every one had drunk heavily. But late in the morning Wilkes called on Arnold and O'Laughlin and apologized for anything he may have said, begging them to agree to join him that afternoon in the abduction near the Soldiers' Home. Surratt, he said, had yielded to his pleas and was heartily with him again. O'Laughlin shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't mind one more fumble at the old man," he said.

"I'll do whatever you wish, this week," was Arnold's unwilling concession. "But after this week, I'm absolutely through."

"Meet me at the café I told you of last night, then, going at once, but singly," ordered Booth and he rushed out to his horse, mounted and galloped off through the mud.

They gathered, one at a time, in the restaurant at

the foot of the hill below the Home. By two o'clock all were present and after several rounds of drinks, Booth whispered their final orders.

They all would hide in a clump of trees a quarter of a mile below the restaurant. While the others attacked the cavalry guard, Booth and Payne would attack the occupants of the carriage, shooting the coachman whose place Surratt would take and drive them across country while Booth and Payne secured the President.

Just before the time set for his start to the Soldiers' Home, Chief Justice Chase called on the President at the White House. Lincoln had been ill, had in fact been holding his Cabinet meetings in his bedroom but he had insisted in the face of his wife's protest that he felt well enough for the drive that afternoon.

Chase, his usual condescending, handsome self, greeted Lincoln as if there never had been a difference of opinion between them and asked for a Presidential permit for a friend of his to trade in tobacco with the South.

The President hesitated. "Mr. Welles says I'm a fool to issue any more of those. Hold on! Welles is outside. We'll have him in." He pulled the bell rope and the Secretary of the Navy entered before Chase could voice his displeasure.

"Mr. Welles has decided views on the matter of trade permits, haven't you, Mr. Secretary!" said Lincoln. "I'm rather inclined to agree with them. Just repeat what you said at the last Cabinet meeting, will you?"

"With pleasure," replied Father Welles, smoothing his white beard and looking benevolently at Chase whom he disliked. "I've had a great deal of annoyance with those Presidential permits. Several of the holders have called on me for permission to pass the blockade, even demanding a gunboat to convey them! Colonel Segar,

the last of them was very importunate. I told him, as I've told all the others, that I won't yield in this matter; that I've been opposed on principle to the whole scheme of special permits to trade ever since the time you, Mr. Chase, commenced it. I am no believer in the policy of trading with public enemies, carrying on peace and war at the same time. I have no doubt you merely expected to make political capital out of this corrupting and demoralizing scheme, sir, but it has impaired my confidence in you."

Chase, who was sitting across the Cabinet table from Welles, while Lincoln watched him from his desk, grew purple. His smooth-shaven face stiffened.

"I've heard a great many rallying cries in the political world, Mr. Welles," he said angrily, "but none so absurd as one that would link Chase and corruption."

Lincoln cleared his throat. He had desired Welles to deliver his blast but he wanted no quarrelling between the two men. He said, quickly:

"There are no rallying cries any more! Petroleum V. Nasby ridiculed them out of existence." And he quoted with great enjoyment. "'Arouse to wunst. Rally agin Conway! Rally agin Hegler! Rally agin Hegler's family! Rally agin the porter at the Reed House! Rally agin the cook at the Crook House! Rally agin the nigger widder in Vance's addishun! Rally agin Missis Umsted! Rally agin Missis Umsted's childern by her first husband. Rally agin Missis Umsted's childern by her sekkand husband. Rally agin all the rest of Missis Umsted's children. Rally agin the nigger that kum yisterday. Rally agin the saddle kulured gal that yust to be here. Ameriky fer white men!'"

Welles smiled dryly. But Chase, who had little sense of humor in general and none at all where Lincoln's pet stories were concerned, rose with dignity.

Lincoln came to his feet. "There'll be no rallying cries against you, Mr. Chase, but in spite of Nasby's efforts, our friend Mr. Welles has created such a strong one against me and my cotton-tobacco permits that I can't permit *him* to make political capital of it. Come with me to the Soldiers' Home play and I'll tell you what I can do for you. Though you observe, I have very little influence with this Administration! You come too, Mr. Welles. I know you both are going anyhow and you may as well fill up my carriage."

His tone made it impossible not to accept the invitation and a few moments later the three descended to the front entrance. But as the President put his foot on the carriage step, Dr. Stone hurried up and caught his arm.

"Mr. Lincoln, I can't answer for the consequences if you go out this afternoon! Lung fever may be the least of it. Gentlemen, add your pleas to mine! You know how exhausted the President is and now with this heavy cold—"

The President stared down at the doctor's anxious face. Come to think of it, he did feel ill. And more than that, there never could be a better opportunity for Salmon P. Chase to be alone with the one man who dared and cared to warn him off the political quicksands near which no Chief Justice of the United States ought to tread. He drew back:

"You two take my place," he said and slammed the carriage door. To his surprise, they drove off without protest.

Lincoln went upstairs to bed.

Dr. Stone promised that he would be well enough to attend the benefit performance to John McCullough. But late in the afternoon of the 18th, Mary asked him if he

didn't think it would be tactful to accept an invitation from Charles Sumner.

"He has a box at Grover's Theater for 'Faust,' " she said, "and he's asked us to go."

Hill Lamon, who was present—Lincoln was resting on a sofa in the sitting room—exclaimed quickly, "The very thing! It's leaked out somehow that you are expected at Ford's to-night and I don't want that. I was relieved you kept your agreement about going to plays when your purpose had been made public, and didn't go to the Soldiers' Home performance."

Lincoln smiled guiltily but made no confession. "I'd like to hear 'Faust,' " he murmured. "Well, let it be so." He closed his eyes, opening them shortly to say, "You can stop worrying about me, next week, Hill. I'm going down to visit Grant for two weeks, if nothing interferes."

"Thank heaven!" groaned Lamon.

Nothing did interfere and Lincoln with Mary and Tad left Washington on the *River Queen* on March 23rd.

On March 27th, John Surratt went to Richmond, returning on April 3rd, and leaving the same night for Canada. Before leaving, he told Weichmann that when in Richmond he'd had a conversation with Jefferson Davis and Judah P. Benjamin and that they had given him two hundred dollars in gold. He showed Louis several gold pieces in earnest of this.

Wilkes Booth was discomfited but not entirely discouraged. The failure of the latest scheme did, however, increase his conviction that Lincoln was under Satanic protection. If he could not be abducted, then other and more drastic means must be used to remove him from office. He talked with Lewis Payne about this. Payne, after all, was the only altruistic person in the conspiracy, excepting himself, Booth thought. Yet even Payne was not, at first, prepared to go farther than

abduction. Even when on April 3rd news reached Washington of the fall of Richmond, Payne was not sure that anything like shooting old Abe would save the South. Still, he remained in his boarding place, playing sick and sneaking out only when Booth urged him to attend the sessions held by a group of Sons of Liberty in a room rented from a colored woman on D Street.

Sam Arnold went down to Fortress Monroe and got a job. Mike O'Laughlin returned to Baltimore. Atzerodt and Herold continued to hang around at Wilkes Booth's heels like unthinking hounds waiting to be loosed on their prey.

Shortly after the fall of Richmond, Wilkes told Atzerodt to sell his buggy, told Payne to remain in hiding and he himself went to New York to see Samuel Chester.

Chester, in spite of his obvious distaste for the scheme and in spite of his previous apparent firm refusal, permitted Wilkes to talk to him again in their favorite saloon, the House of Parliament. The dialogue was much the same as before.

"But it would ruin my family if anything went wrong and I have no money to leave them," muttered Chester.

"I have three thousand dollars I can put at the disposal of your family," pleaded Wilkes. "There is real money in this thing, Chester. I haven't any myself. I or some of the party must go to Richmond to get money. I've already spent five thousand dollars."

"Supposing I came in," Chester looked uneasily around the crowded room, "what would I have to do?"

"Merely open the back door of the theater for me," replied Wilkes.

Chester stared at him suspiciously. "I do believe you're crazy, Booth," he exclaimed. "Now, once for all, don't mention this matter to me again."

Booth brought both great fists down on the table. "My God, why didn't I settle this myself when I had such an excellent chance to shoot him on Inauguration Day. I was as near to him as I am to you."

Chester grunted and Wilkes, giving him an uncertain glance, subsided to silent drinking of his usual astounding amount of brandy.

CHAPTER X

ANNA DICKINSON

IT was misty April dusk when the *River Queen* made her moorings in Washington again. It was Sunday, the 9th, Palm Sunday, and the Seventh Street wharf was deserted save for the cavalry guard and the carriages of the President and his party. Lincoln felt Washington close in on him like a familiar miasma as he crossed the quay. But nothing could change the fact, he assured himself, that Richmond had fallen, though he still had not assimilated that glorious truth. Now, if only Lee's army would surrender, the end of the dreadful conflict would come. He had had no word from Grant for twenty-four hours, of course. Perhaps the much-prayed-for *finis* had been written while the *River Queen* had been paddling up the Potomac.

As the carriage turned into the mud of Pennsylvania Avenue, he saw that the street was ablaze with bonfires. He spoke to William Crook, his body-guard who sat with Tad, opposite Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln.

"What are they halloo-ing about, Crook? Not still for Richmond? Here, stop the carriage a moment!" The coachman pulled up. Lincoln leaned out of the carriage window and beckoned to a lad who was breaking up a barrel. "What are you celebrating, my boy?" he asked.

"Why, where you been that you don't know that, Mr. Lincoln?" grinned the youngster. "Richmond's fallen and Grant's chasing Lee across Virginia!"

Lincoln smiled and ordered Burke to drive on.

Pandemonium reigned on the Avenue. Bands marched up and down the sidewalks. Near Fourteenth Street was a special stand with an illuminated sign, "Jeff Davis' Band!" The musicians wore Confederate gray. Again Lincoln ordered the carriage to halt and made inquiries of a bystander.

"Why, Mr. Lincoln," said the man, "those fellows marched into Washington last week, playing the 'Star-spangled Banner.' They claim they were with Early and got away just before Sheridan captured them. They scuttled in here with their tails between their legs and asked the Marshal or anybody else to take 'em back into the Union. Marshal Lamon gave 'em this job."

The President laughed heartily and once more the carriage drove on.

A huge illumination over the White House gates said, "The Union! It must and shall be preserved!"

"Stanton did that!" exclaimed Lincoln. "He's been planning it for four years!"

"Now the wa' is ova', papa day," said Tad, "Mr. Stanton can't be Secretawy of Wa', can he? You'll have to find him a new job."

"Stanton can be anything he wants to be," declared the President. "Only he and I know what his work has been worth. I'll give him my place if he wants it."

"Mercy!" smiled Mary. "And just as your place has become humanly endurable! Well, I'm more than willing, my dear! Let's be off to Europe."

"No! No!" shouted Tad. "Califo'nia o' bust!"

His father and mother smiled but Lincoln, as the carriage drew up under the portico, said soberly, "Mary, I reckon I'll drive right over to Seward's house. We don't know much of anything except that he was badly hurt in the run-away and I'm worried about him."

"You won't be late?" asked Mary. "Crook, don't let him out of your sight."

"I won't, Mrs. Lincoln," replied the young man, reassuringly.

"Mary, the war's over," protested Lincoln, as he lifted her from the carriage.

"And the bitterness of defeat will treble the desire of Southern cranks to attack you, dearest," returned Mary, smoothing down her crinoline. Her husband always would swing her out of a vehicle as if she were a little girl but she'd given up protesting.

"You have a low opinion of human nature, madam!" jibed the President, as he returned to his seat.

There was straw before the Sewards' steps and the door-bell was muffled. Fred Seward, the Secretary's son and the Assistant Secretary of State, opened at the President's knock and would have led the way into the drawing-room but that Loncoln stood fast in the dimly lighted hall.

"Fred, I want to see your father."

"He's very ill, Mr. Lincoln. His jaw was broken in two places and is in an iron frame. His right shoulder was dislocated and his whole body is frightfully bruised. He's been delirious until to-day and he can't talk at all."

"Poor fellow! Poor fellow!" ejaculated Lincoln. "It was just an accident? You don't suspect foul play?"

The young man smiled grimly. "Of course, we suspect anything! He'd only just received word of a devilish plot against him via Canada and France. But at least, he will live and for all his agony, he's where assassins can't touch him for a while. My poor mother says that's one crumb of comfort in a terrible meal!"

"Let me see him, Fred," urged Lincoln, "even if I can't talk with him. We've been through several

cyclones together, your father and I, and we mean something to each other."

The young man's bearded face softened. "I'll go up and see, sir."

But Lincoln would not wait. He followed up the stairs and in at the door of the chamber where his friend lay. A man nurse rose hurriedly from the bedside and bowed.

"I'm going to sit with Mr. Seward for an hour," said the President urbanely. "You may leave us for that time. You, too, Fred!" and he seated himself on the edge of the bed.

Only Seward's fine blue eyes were visible above heavy bandages. Lincoln picked up the hand which lay on the coverlid and the blue eyes smiled. The President said nothing for a moment. He liked Seward heartily. The liking did not occasionally flare into affection as did his feeling toward Stanton, and this, he thought, was curious because he had more confidence in Seward's loyalty to himself than in Stanton's. Ever since 1861 when he had forced William Seward to perceive that the President of the United States was Lincoln and not Seward, the Secretary of State had been his faithful adherent. He was in many ways more congenial to Lincoln than any other member of the Cabinet. He liked the New York man's vivacity and his genial ways. He ignored his illusions of greatness as well as his loquacity and he deeply admired his gifts as a politician and lawyer.

As he sat looking at the injured man, he thought most of all of how uncritical Seward had been when every one else in the world save Mary had been harshly critical. Even Hill Lamon had reproved him for his manners! And yet, in those early days, when Seward had held Abraham Lincoln in contempt, he had withheld

harsh comment. The President felt emotion rising in his throat and with a mental shake he said softly:

"No one can tell you your necktie's riding over your collar, right now, Mr. Secretary, eh?"

The blue eyes twinkled and much encouraged, Lincoln went on. "If you want some details about the late War of the Rebellion, squeeze my hand! Hah! You'll be demanding a cigar, next. . . . Seward, I went into Richmond—not to crow over them, you know. Grant wanted me to take possession, as it were. I never felt sadder in my life than when I walked through those streets and thought of what their desolation signified. General Lee had ordered the tobacco warehouses and the ammunition and other stores destroyed before he evacuated the town. The fire spread and the business section was pretty well burned out along with some of the residences—and pillaged by the city riff-raff before our boys got there under General Weitzel. It was still on fire when I arrived the next day and our troops were working hard to put out the flames. Those Richmond folks were starving and Weitzel fed them. I'm taking for granted this interests you, Mr. Seward?"

His fingers were pressed quickly and he continued. "Weitzel had made his headquarters in Jeff Davis' house, about two miles from where we landed. A nice place with a big pillared porch. By jings, it was well furnished and plenty of food! Jeff didn't live as hard as the rest of Richmond, I can tell you. Weitzel was out when I got there, but he soon came rushing in all out of breath to tell me that Judge Campbell and some other Rebels wanted to see me. Campbell is just as full of tricks now as he was at the conference on the *River Queen,* in February. He almost had you once or twice, then, Mr. Secretary."

Again the blue eyes smiled and the hot fingers said "Touché." Lincoln chuckled and went on.

"While we were waiting for Campbell, Weitzel told me that the day before when the fire was at its worst, a darky had run out of a house and told Weitzel's orderly his mistress wanted him. The orderly went in and was met by a lady who told him her mother was ill and she needed assistance and protection for moving her out of the zone of danger. The orderly sent for an ambulance and a guard and then he discovered that the invalid was Mrs. Robert E. Lee and the younger lady was her daughter! They took mighty good care of them. I was glad to hear of it. What Sherman's had to do in Georgia sticks in my throat. I told Weitzel to let all the Richmond folks off easy."

He sighed.

"Well, Campbell came along and informed me that the war was over and how about peace. I didn't let him tie me up—just let him talk and then promised him a written memorandum next day. He looks as bad as if he'd fought the war single-handed.—The memorandum simply reiterated the terms we'd given 'em at Hampton Roads. Before I left, I gave Weitzel a letter to the effect that the gentlemen who'd been acting as the Legislature of Virginia in support of the Rebellion might now desire to assemble in Richmond and withdraw their Virginia troops from resistance to the General Government. On the face of it, it's a military measure, so nobody up here can misinterpret it as a sinister move on my part to organize a permanent State Government. Isn't that so?"

Seward's eyes looked heavy.

"I mustn't bore you!" ejaculated Lincoln. "I'll tell you a little story and then leave you in peace. Peace, literally, eh?—Well, one of my excursions down there was in an ambulance drawn by six mules. The roads

were frightful and the driver certainly cursed those mules as fully and completely as I've ever heard it accomplished. Finally I leaned forward and touched the man on the shoulder. 'Excuse me, my friend,' I asked, 'but are you an Episcopalian?' The man looked scared. 'No, Mr. President,' he said, 'I'm a Methodist!' 'That's queer,' I told him. 'You swear just like Governor Seward and he's a church warden!' There was no more cussing!"

He laughed heartily and was glad to see the amusement in Seward's eyes. "That's about all the news," he said as he rose, "except we brought home a yellow kitten we found prowling in the Petersburg trenches."

He moved softly from the room. Fred Seward and the nurse, standing uneasily in the hall, looked relieved. The doctor had forbidden visitors. But when they examined the Secretary they found him in his first normal sleep.

Mary was waiting for him as usual in the sitting room. He slumped with a sigh into a chair before the fire.

"Change your boots for your slippers, do!" pleaded Mary.

"No, I've got to go over to see Stanton before I settle down."

His wife sighed. "You are going to have a vacation this summer if I have to get Congress to pass a law about it. In fact there's nothing I'd like better than to appear in the Senate and compare the amount of rest you get per year with the amount they get, the lazy things."

Lincoln's white teeth flashed. "Go ahead, Mary! I'd like to hear you, myself."

She joined in his laughter as she pushed a glass of milk within reach of his hand. He began to drink it slowly as he told her about his call on Seward. In the midst of the account, the yellow kitten pattered briskly

up to the hearth. Lincoln lifted her to his knee and watched her with interest while she washed her face on this precarious perch.

"A kitten is a comfortable kind of creature," he murmured. "Well, poor old Seward!" He finished the account.

They sat in a silence that lasted until Lamon came in, eager for news.

"Now, Hill," protested Mary, "don't get Mr. Lincoln to talking to-night! He's extraordinarily tired. I don't want him even to see Mr. Stanton."

Lamon leaned a powerful elbow on the mantel and looked keenly at the President. "You're right, as usual, Mrs. Lincoln. And Stanton's not in his office, so far as I know."

"There!" triumphantly from Mary.

"Hill, you must remind me to tell General Grant," said Lincoln, "that I went round and called on George Pickett's wife while I was in Richmond."

"I will, sir," replied Lamon with a little smile. "How did Crook behave himself, Mr. Lincoln?"

"Admirably! I'm here, am I not?" laughing softly.

Mary spoke quickly. "What's your next most pressing problem, Mr. Lincoln?"

"In general, to get the Southern States to functioning while Congress is not in session. In particular to try to get Andy Johnson to understand what I'm trying to do."

"A Vice-President's understanding isn't important, my dear," was Mary's comment. "I don't like that man. He's a drunkard." She began to fold up the tidy she was knitting.

"I know that was a bad slip he made at the Inaugural," admitted Lincoln. "I had my fears at the time. But I'm over those. I've known Andy for many years. He's not a drunkard."

Mary compressed her lips.

Lamon nodded and asked, "Do you think he can lift part of your burdens, sir?"

The President nodded. "If he can't skin the animal, he must be ready to hold a leg."

Mary elevated her firm little chin. "I don't want that man at my table!"

"Well, you'll have to have him as need arises, my dear," returned Lincoln mildly. He smoothed the kitten with a long gentle hand. "Has Tad named the kitten, yet?"

"Anna Dickinson!" answered Mary.

Lincoln laughed. "Trust Tad's genius for a smart christening!"

He stifled a yawn and rose. "I'm going to bed, by jings, and let the rest of you put the lights out and wind the clock for the nation. I dare to realize now how much I need sleep." He strolled off to his room, the kitten on his shoulder.

That familiar refuge was particularly welcome, tonight. The huge mahogany bed would be grateful after the cramped affairs he'd occupied for ten days. The only light in the room was from the lamp on the round table by the pillow. A Bible lay here and a copy of "Macbeth." He thrust aside the heavy red window curtains and stood looking out into the night as he wound his watch. The dull sky reflected distant bonfires. He had stood there a long time, the kitten purring against his ear when the hall door opened and Stanton, in evening dress, rushed in.

"Lee's surrendered!" he gasped.

He darted across the room, seized the President round the waist, gave him a mighty hug and started to sing:

> "Praise God from whom all blessings flow!
> Praise him all creatures—"

He stopped, pulled Lincoln's great head down and kissed the President's hollow cheek.

"It's over!" whispered Stanton.

Then he burst into hard sobs and rushed from the room.

Lincoln stood rigid. The relief was too great. The chairs and tables did a fandango for a moment before his eyes. After a deep breath or two, he took up his night lamp and opened the door into Mary's room. She was asleep, her great braids drooping in the familiar way over the edge of the bed. Since the fall of Richmond, she'd been sleeping well. He returned soundlessly to his own quarters.

Now he lighted the gas and looked about him. There by the fireplace hung the map with its great black blotches—the slave map, he had worked out four years before. He deliberately unhooked it and with his jackknife cut it to pieces and began slowly feeding it to the fire.

They must head off Sherman. . . .

There would be no more death. . . .

God!

He stretched out his long legs and leaned back in the rosewood rocking chair. The kitten clambered over the back and leaped to the night table which held his little milk pitcher.

Perhaps, after prolonged labor in childbirth, a woman felt like this. Just about like this, utterly worn out, but happy, knowing all was well with the child— He closed his eyes for a moment and thought he was back on the *River Queen,* listening to the bombardment of Petersburg. No, it was a knocking on the door. Elphonso Dunn, one of the bodyguards, put his head in.

"Lee has surrendered, Mr. Lincoln," he whispered, loudly.

"I know, my boy, I know!" whispered Lincoln. "I'm trying my best to soak it in."

"It's midnight. Won't you go to bed, sir?" The young man came in and with a persuasive air handed the President his old dressing gown.

Lincoln heaved himself to his feet. "Not a bad notion, I reckon. Jings, look at Anna Dickinson! Young woman, you're under arrest!"

Dunn laughed and seizing the little thief, dropped her into his coat pocket. She immediately thrust forth a small face which she began to wash sedulously.

Lincoln said good night to the guard and turned off the lights. He would undress after a moment and dropping to the bed, he fell instantly asleep.

CHAPTER XI

CHARITY FOR ALL

AT dawn, the thunder of guns—Antietam!—Gettysburg?—Heaps of unburied dead whom he, Abraham Lincoln, had sent to the trenches— What was the use of firing on dead men? It must be stopped! He jerked himself up indignantly and sat blinking. Boom! Boom! The window glass in his room tinkled to the floor. The White House trembled to its roots. Suddenly, Lincoln laughed aloud. As he did so both doors of his room opened. Mary came through one. Through the other, John Hay appeared, followed by Taddie, both solemnly walking on their hands. They paraded around the room and out again, uttering raucous sounds.

Husband and wife smiled, first at the young people, next at each other. But the smile slowly faded as gray eyes gazed deep into violet and then Mary cast herself into his arms. They clung to each other in silence.

Mary saved them both from breaking down by freeing herself and saying, severely, "Abraham Lincoln, you slept in your clothes last night!"

"Yes, ma'am," he replied meekly, and went about making his toilet, grateful for the steadying force of simple duties.

As soon as he was dressed, he joined Tad and John Hay on the south steps of the Treasury Building which commanded a view of Pennsylvania Avenue. The sun was only just rising but the familiar street was packed with an embracing, singing, laughing, weeping crowd.

The horse-cars could not move. Racing from side streets came several steam fire-engines which planted themselves in a group, nose to nose and proceeded to bellow hoarsely. Stanton's salute of five hundred guns was augmented by the firing of the cannon in Lafayette Square. The red glow of the sunrise over the capitol was shortly obscured by rain but nothing reduced the ardor of the people. A small boy perched on the iron fence near the President's group flung a bunch of unlighted firecrackers at Tad and screamed, "There's the Lincolns." A man caught sight of the President and beckoning to the crowd, scrambled over the fence, shouting, "Speech! Speech!"

Lincoln was in no mood for speaking. He fled into the Treasury Building. Early as it was, the employees had assembled and were now gathered in the great main corridor, singing:

> "—Praise Him all creatures here below!
> Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts—"

The President drew his sleeve across his eyes and covering his lips with a cold, shaking hand, slipped unobserved through a side door into the White House grounds. He made his way past the lilac hedge by the stables toward the kitchen entrance, pausing once as a familiar scent broke in on his pre-occupation. On this sheltered south slope, the flowers were opening precociously. He broke off an exquisite, half-blown spray and buried his face in its indescribable fragrance. The little round purple buds were wet with April rain.

Mary, waiting for him at the breakfast table, pinned the spray on her India muslin breakfast-sacque.

"Your favorites always come early there by the stables!" she exclaimed.

"It's a homely blossom and as sweet as home is," he

replied, accepting his cup of coffee from the butler. His hand was still shaking and he smiled at it ruefully. "Those Treasury fellows, Mary—"

Just outside the windows which gave on the north lawn with a view of Adams' Grove, there arose a mighty chorus:

"O say can you see, by the dawn's early light—"

"Let's have that window closed!" urged the President. "I can't stand any more."

As the butler hastened to obey, Tom Pendel, the doorkeeper came in. "They want you to speak, sir."

"I *can't,* my boy!" looking at Pendel beseechingly.

"I'll stave 'em off!" exclaimed the man stoutly, closing the door.

"Now here's where I put my foot down," said Mary, who had been watching her husband's twitching face with anxiety. "You eat those eggs and three slices of toast. Here it is, hot and crisp. James, you go lock that door into the hall."

Her cheeks were pink with vehemence. Lincoln obeyed her literally and afterward climbed the private staircase with Mary holding firmly to his elbow. She deposited him in his office and spoke to William Crook standing slim and alert at the door.

"Listen to me, William Crook," lifting a small plump forefinger, "only the usual visitors! No strangers, I don't care how they come recommended by themselves!"

"Nonsense, Mary!" protested Lincoln, half irritated. Then he smiled and hastened across the room. Andrew Johnson was standing at the window. The two men shook hands cordially. Mary bowed and went out with her nose in the air.

Johnson was fifty-seven years old but looked ten years younger, in spite of his embattled history. He was

nearly six feet tall and strongly built. His hair, as thick and as black as the President's, fairly crackled with vitality. His clean-shaven face with its long nose, too sensitive of nostril, the lips, too much compressed and drooping, told little of the dreadful years in Tennessee. His eyes were as magnificent as Hannibal Hamlin's, his predecessor's, black, deep-set, intelligent, and in Johnson's case, unfathomable.

When he spoke it was in a soft drawl. "I hope I'm not intruding, Mr. Lincoln. I came early to avoid the crush. I want to offer my congratulations and to present a petition!" He smiled whimsically.

"You too, Brutus!" exclaimed Lincoln. "Well, if no one had pestered me more with petitions than you, Mr. Johnson, this would be an easy job. What can I do for you?"

"I want to protest earnestly against Grant's terms of surrender to Lee. He shouldn't have been allowed to surrender as a soldier of honor. Grant should have retained the entire command as prisoners of war and held Lee in confinement until instructions could be received from this Administration." His voice grew tense. "Do you know, Mr. Lincoln, Grant's sent that whole army off home, on parole, taking their horses with them?"

"I would expect General Grant to do about that," replied the President, looking at Johnson with a peculiar sinking of the heart. "Sit down, and let's talk it over."

The Vice-President dropped into the chair beside Lincoln's desk, crossed his knees and sat motionless.

Lincoln pulled out his paper knife. "What do you think we'll gain at this point, Mr. Johnson, by increasing General Lee's agony of mind?"

"General Lee is a traitor, sir, and should be treated as such. I'm entirely indifferent to his state of mind." Johnson's voice was cool.

"You have nothing personal against Lee?" asked Lincoln.

"Nothing. I'm doing my utmost to see this whole tragedy only in terms of the Union although they did their best to crucify me body and soul, in Tennessee. They dragged my sick wife from bed and imprisoned her. The exposure killed my son. They pulled me from a train and manhandled me with every physical insolence they could devise. My life has been in hourly jeopardy. Yet I know that Lee had nothing direct to do with all this. No, he only upheld the whole traitorous gang from which this poisonous vapor escaped, upheld them with his army. How long would the rebellion have lasted without Lee? I tell you, Mr. Lincoln, treason is a crime, the very highest crime known to the law and these are men who ought to suffer the penalty of their treason."

Lincoln moved uneasily but Johnson's even voice, an exceptionally pleasant voice, floated on.

"To the unconscious, the deceived, the conscripted, to the great mass of the misled, I would say, mercy, clemency, reconciliation and the restoration of their government. But on those who deceived, on the conscious, intelligent, influential traitor, I would inflict the severest penalty of their crime."

The President told himself that he ought not to be impatient. After all this was the man who alone of all the Southern Senators in 1861 had remained true to the Union and in the Senate Chamber yonder had stood up and defied Secession to seduce Tennessee from her loyalty. This was the man who as military Governor of Tennessee had held the old State to the Union, attainted though she was. The North owed an enormous debt to Johnson.

He put a firm though gentle hand on the Vice-President's knee. "I tell you, my friend, if you think you can

restore this nation on the Mosaic law, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, you lack understanding of human nature. The wisest measure Grant could take was to send all those men home."

"And what will happen when they get there?" demanded Johnson. "What will human nature lead them to do? They'll attack and rob the folks who've been loyal. And all your work of reconstruction will go for naught. You'll see anarchy in Tennessee, in Louisiana, in Missouri and—"

"You don't know the people," interrupted Lincoln. "It couldn't but be that every man not naturally a robber or a cut-throat would gladly put an end to such a state of things. Neither non-Union nor Union men want their homes destroyed or want to continue the war. They need only to reach an understanding with each other. I propose to have neighborhood meetings called everywhere, all entertaining a sincere purpose for mutual security in the future whatever they may before have thought, said or done about the war or about anything else. Let all such meet and waiving all else, pledge each other to make common cause against whoever persists in making or aiding further disturbance. The practical means they will best know how to adopt and apply. At such meetings, old friendships will cross the memory and honor and Christian charity will come in to help these afflicted people."

"You really believe that, sir?" demanded Johnson. "Is that as far as your disciplining of these traitors will go?"

Lincoln brought his fist down on his desk and shouted, "It was hate that made this war! The war is over. Let no man come to me asking me to express his revenge or his hate for him. By the cross of the Saviour, I'll not do it!"

Johnson bit his lip and for a moment there was only the sound of Washington's celebration to be heard in the room. Then the Vice-President said, huskily, "I suppose I'm naturally a violent man, Mr. Lincoln. If it hadn't been for my wife, I'd have been dead in some political feud, long before the war. She's been the restraining force that's helped me to get this grip on myself. And I can keep it except when I think of what Southern chivalry did to her. Perhaps I do permit something personal to come into my attitude but—" He scowled thoughtfully and sighed, "No! No! I cannot see it as you do."

"Then you must let me do the seeing," said Lincoln, gently. There was no mistaking the authority in his voice, however, as he went on. "You must stand foot to foot with me against those men in the Capitol whose nostrils belch revenge. *There shall be no revenge, Johnson.*"

"What'll you do with Jeff Davis, sir?"

"Give him a chance to run away, clear to Mexico or Europe. I propose to keep my eyes strictly at home while the leaders of the rebellion skip abroad—if only they have the sense to do so. Do you see, my friend?"

"I see," replied Johnson, "but how are you going to carry it out?"

His skeptical voice disappointed the President. He leaned back in his chair and let his vision wander far beyond the man facing him, over a panorama of battlefields where lay thousands of still gray and blue forms which had paid the last full measure of devotion. Their wounds like those of the dead Cæsar were poor, dumb mouths that bade him speak for them. But not to counsel murder! Nay, it was not revengeful demands from soldiers living or dead that troubled him. It was the demands from civilians who never had smelled blood that

would keep mutiny smoldering in the broken hearts of the South. And as revengeful as any were the men nearest him, members of the Cabinet as well as the Vice-President. He must make his own stand known immediately. And yet, he had a curious conviction that this would be another losing fight for him as had been his struggle to direct the reconstruction of the seceded States. Charles Sumner had absolutely blocked the Presidential plan there. This matter of handling the Confederate leaders was closely bound up with the policy for reconstruction. It was going to be difficult—very difficult. Well, thank God, he still held the whip-hand. He'd remind people of that. He rose, and in a decisive manner said, "You'll greatly oblige me, Mr. Johnson, if you'll refrain from talking revenge from this time forward."

Johnson rising also, looked distinctly affronted. "I have never acknowledged the right of any man to muzzle me, Mr. Lincoln."

Lincoln's eyes suddenly twinkled. "Then I'll have to ask Mrs. Johnson to take a hand. I believe in petticoat government. Look where it's put me!"

The Vice-President smiled coldly and went out.

Secretary Stanton passed him in the doorway. "Look here, Mr. Lincoln," he demanded, "do you know the terms that fool of a Grant has given Lee? I tell you, sir—"

"Sit down, Mr. Stanton." Lincoln had always observed that men raved less when sitting than when standing. "Now then, I've had no official word as to what General Grant has done, but I know what his purpose was when I left him. He's done the right thing—You go to the window, Stanton and bow. It'll calm those fellows outside, perhaps."

The Secretary of War jumped impatiently to his feet

and stalked over to the open window. The crowd by now had packed the south as well as the north side of the house. Cheers greeted Stanton's appearance.

"Speak to 'em, Mr. Secretary!" urged Lincoln. Grinning to himself he turned to his desk and began to sign documents.

Stanton leaned out into the softly falling rain obediently and began to talk. He was an excellent impromptu orator and Lincoln, signing mechanically, listened with pleasure. But at the closing sentence the President's eyebrows began to go up.

"Let us ask Divine Providence to teach us how to be humble in the midst of triumph, how to be just in the hour of victory and how to so secure the foundations of this republic, soaked as they are in blood, that they will last forever and ever."

A mighty roar came from below. Stanton bowed and came back to his chair.

Lincoln laid down his pen. "I take it from your speech, then, that you're going to let Jeff Davis go."

"Go! Do you call that justice?" demanded Stanton. "No, sir, we're hard after Jeff Davis. Grant's got to keep Lee. I want him and Davis in the same basket. We must let them see what they've been doing. I'll hang them and a half a dozen of the chief traitors in each state. That'll teach 'em."

"Mr. Stanton," said Lincoln, slowly, "we'll do nothing of the sort!" He steeled himself for an argument but the mercurial Stanton laughed.

"Well, cut off their heads, then!" he said. "But not to-day!"

"I accept the armistice! What do you hear from Sherman?"

"Nothing," answered the Secretary, "I don't even know whether he's heard of Lee's surrender or not."

"I hope the fighting's stopped, down there. I want General Grant to come up here for a talk and I'll send for Governor Pierpont, too. He's been carrying the government of Virginia around in his breeches pocket for so long I'm doubtful whether or not it'll function. But he's the spokesman for the Virginia loyalists. By the way, I told General Weitzel to let the Virginia Confederate legislature get together long enough to recall its army."

"What?" demanded Stanton, the familiar ugly rasp in his tone. "Well, of all the damn fool performances! Can't you see we must have nothing to do with Rebel legislatures, that we can't?"

"My message was purely a military measure," interrupted the President, gently. "The Confederate troops are subject to recall, until peace is established, by the Confederate legislature. Come, Mr. Stanton, there are fireworks enough outside. Let's not have any within."

"Then you refuse to discuss your fatal act!" cried Stanton despairingly.

"I'll tell you just how it happened," said Lincoln. "I couldn't foresee that Lee would surrender his whole army immediately. I put into Judge Campbell's hands an informal paper repeating the instructions I gave Seward when he met the commissioners at Hampton Roads in February. And I added that if 'the war be now further persisted in by the Rebels, confiscated property shall at least bear the additional cost and that confiscation shall be remitted to the people of any State which will now promptly and in good faith withdraw its troops from the resistance to the Government.' Nothing new in that proposal, Stanton. I've made it many a time. Judge Campbell thought the legislature would do this so I told General Weitzel to let 'em try."

"But it's wrong to countenance *any* Rebel legislature,

Mr. Lincoln," said Stanton, very earnestly, "for any purpose. You set a precedent that'll make endless trouble."

"I don't agree with you," said Lincoln. "Good God, what does it matter how it's done, so that this shattered people is restored to normal life?"

Stanton groaned, hopelessly.

Lincoln changed the subject abruptly. "Are you going to get down to Fort Sumter on the 14th when we raise the flag again? I think either you or I should be there and I certainly can't leave Washington so soon again."

"No! No! I'm needed here to unscramble the eggs," replied Stanton impatiently. "And you must stay here under close guard. For many months now, the vindictives of the South are going to be hard after you. I'm going to be frank with you, Mr. Lincoln."

"Do you insinuate that this conversation has hitherto lacked frankness on your part?" Lincoln's tired eyes twinkled.

"I mean that I'm going to tell you, sir, that your attitude on the matter of assassination is pure bravado. No sane man living really courts murder. Look the facts in the face, Mr. Lincoln. Do you *want* to die to-day —to-morrow?"

Something icy clutched at Lincoln's heart. "Certainly not!" he ejaculated.

"Of course not! You're human like the rest of us. Then I warn you again and most solemnly that you must keep away from public places and gatherings. If you don't, *nothing* can save you, nothing."

Stanton was so earnest, Lincoln was so sure of his affection beneath his nerve-racked manner that something of the Secretary's fears crept clay-cold into his brain. He shivered, then laughed at himself.

"I think perhaps, though I'm not sure, that I could shoulder a gun and march into battle firmly enough, Stan-

ton, but you make a woman of me with this question. I promise you again to be careful."

"I suppose that's all I can hope for," grumbled Stanton, rising. "Has Henry Ward Beecher agreed to speak at Fort Sumter?"

"Yes, he's going to drop in here in a day or so to get suggestions," replied Lincoln.

"I like him. He's a great and good man," moving toward the door.

Hill Lamon appeared as Stanton disappeared. "I think," he said, "the only way you'll get rid of that mob outside, Mr. Lincoln, is to talk to 'em. They've been demanding you since breakfast time."

Lincoln glanced at the clock. It was just before nine. So long an hour!

CHAPTER XII

O MISTRESS MINE!

LINCOLN never had felt less inclined to make a speech than at this moment. His relief, his anxieties, so mingled in his weary mind that he desired nothing so much as to be silent. But he knew the persistency of crowds so with a sigh of resignation he walked through the close packed waiting room, across the hall to the bedroom over the main entrance from the window of which he frequently spoke. He found Tad already providing amusement for the throngs below. The boy was struggling before the window with the butler who was trying to take a large Rebel flag from him. Just as Lincoln entered, Tad broke free and began to wave the flag over the ledge. A mighty surge of hand clapping rose from below.

The President stepped forward and stood with a hand on Tad's small shoulder.

As far as he could see stretched an agitated mass of people. As the crowd spied him, an extraordinary roar of voices rose. Hats were thrown in the air. Handkerchiefs and banners fluttered. The smoke of unheard fire-crackers drifted upward. Bands blared faintly through the Niagara of human clamor. Lincoln could not bear much of it and stretched out his great arm in a faint hope that he might lessen the din. To his astonishment, the silence was instant. The people stood waiting and he knew they expected him to voice everything which they could not express.

But he could not meet their need!

An acute consciousness of all that had happened in the four years just past rushed into his mind with cyclonic force, shook him, paralyzed his tongue. After a moment, he uttered a few broken and inadequate phrases. And then he appealed to the people for help trusting to their sense of humor to give them understanding.

"I see you have a band," he remarked, quietly.

"Three of 'em!" shouted some one.

"Good!" Lincoln went on. "Then I propose that they play a certain tune. I have always thought 'Dixie' was one of the best airs I ever heard. I understand that our adversaries over the way have attempted to appropriate it. I insisted yesterday that we have fairly captured it and presented the question to the Attorney-General. He gave his opinion that it is our lawful prize. But before the bands strike up, I propose three cheers for General Grant and all under his command."

He led the cheers, then proposed three more for "our gallant navy." After these, the bands burst into the tune which had not been heard in Washington since 1861 and Lincoln smiled at its remembered gayety as he moved away from the window.

"I told you I couldn't make a speech," he said to Hill Lamon.

"It was pretty bad," agreed Hill, "but the crowd didn't know the difference."

"Yes, they did. But they understood and were kind. I must not make any speech I don't prepare first. I'm too tired and I make a botch of any extemporaneous attempt," declared the President, irritated by his own inadequacy.

Mary, who had been standing with a quieting hand on Tad's arm during the short ceremony, exchanged glances

with John Hay and said, "Mr. Lincoln, I've asked the Harlans to ride with us this afternoon."

"I hope that includes Mary Harlan!" The President's eyes brightened.

"I hope so!" replied Mary. "You and I must see what we can of her before Bob gets back. But her mother wasn't sure of Mary's plans when she accepted for herself."

They were moving together toward the hall and Lincoln said softly, "Do you really think Bob has a chance there?"

"I have no idea," replied his wife. "She's so demure about him and so friendly with every one! My dear, she's the dearest girl!"

"You're in love with her yourself!" jibed Lincoln.

"I am," very soberly.

"Well, your taste always was good!" with a contented little laugh. "Here, where are you leading me? I've no time for any sitting-room conferences to-day. I've ten days' arrears in correspondence and documents on my desk and look at that reception room!"

The public hall and staircase was packed with visitors. Mary, however, kept his great hand clasped in both of hers, pulling him gently into the pleasant room. "I won't take two minutes. You must hear Bob's letter about Mary which just arrived from somewhere west of Richmond."

"Well, in that case!" He permitted her to tug and push him across the room into his chair before the tiny spring fire. He stretched out his legs with a sigh.

"You must get the true inwardness of this, Abra'm. It's a letter from a boy at the front to his mother waiting in anxiety to learn what's happened to him!" She unfolded the single sheet and read, "Dear Mother, I heard that you and Mary Harlan visited Richmond yesterday.

I do think it was foolish. Didn't father realize that the Rebel capital was no place for you two Marys? I shall be relieved when I hear you are safely back in Washington. How did Mary enjoy the trip? Did she enquire for me or were her thoughts all for John Hay? Curse that man! I'm glad you and father see how extraordinarily lovely she is. I wish I could say the things to her that the President does. Can't you give her a hint that *he's* not her most ardent admirer in our family? I hope General Grant and *his staff* will be ordered to Washington shortly. Do give a hint to father and old Stanton on that, too. Your loving son—"

Lincoln listened, enchanted. All the world of war and intrigue was for a perfect moment wiped from his mind. He laughed delightedly. "But don't you hint, Mary! The boy must do his own courting!"

"I'll not make any promises," returned Mary calmly, folding the letter and replacing it in her pocket. "You will send for Grant, won't you?"

"He's been sent for, my dear, but scarcely, I am afraid, for the purpose of bringing Captain Lincoln up here to cast sheep's eyes at his lady love! I wish Bob wasn't so bashful! He needs a few leaves from John Hay's book!"

"No, he doesn't! John is delightful but his witty impudence wouldn't suit Bob. Bob's a great deal like you, my dear, and if you wish to understand his state of mind, you must remember your own courting days."

"God forbid he'd be such a fool as I!" protested Lincoln, "and God bless them both. Just think, to be in love again, in April! Lucky Bob! In love in April—What's that thing of Whitman's?

"When the snows had melted
When the lilac scent was in the air

O past! O life! O songs of joy!
Loved! Loved! Loved! Loved! . . .
But my love, no more, no more with you!"

"Not that last line! A thousand times, no!" cried Mary. "Abra'm, how can you?"

She flung herself on her knees beside his chair and hid her face on his breast. He looked down on her wonderingly, then bent and kissed her shining braids.

"It's just a poem, darling Mary!" he murmured.

"You always say Whitman is a prophet. Don't quote that again, for God's sake!" lifting her tragic eyes to his.

He returned her look sadly. He must share his thoughts with some one or go mad. He must find some one to whom he could show that shadow which darkened his soul, that shadow which expressed itself in the fateful dream. But what utter cruelty to show it to Mary!

He rose, lifting her with him and said casually, "You know, Mary, Walt Whitman and I have one thing in common and that's a bilious streak!"

She said nothing and he added, "I'm looking forward to that ride this afternoon."

"It will do us both good," agreed Mary, now meeting his effort. "The woods are lovely. Perhaps we'll find some dogwood, wet and cold as it is." She glanced at the timepiece on the mantel. "It's twenty minutes past nine and I am due to leave for the hospitals at half past."

"Jings! Is it that late?" muttered the President, and he rushed into his office.

James Speed, the new Attorney-General, was standing beside the Cabinet table. Lincoln gave a glance half humorous, half irritated at his pile of documents. "No more executions, Speed! The chief butcher is going out of business!"

Speed, handsome, in spite of a heavy beard, laughed

and said, "I know how you feel about that!" Then he added soberly, "These are the police detective reports on the alleged illegal activities of Ward Hill Lamon, Leonard Swett, Thurlow Weed and others, in cotton trading. The war department has asked me for my opinion and you remember you requested me to go over the matter with you."

Lincoln sat down with a sigh. He was utterly weary of the long reports Police Detective Baker was perpetually making. Baker would cast suspicions on the Virgin! As for Hill Lamon! "By jings!" he ejaculated, "I'd answer for Lamon with my life!"

Speed looked silently at the President with fine eyes so like those of his brother Joshua, that dearest friend of Lincoln's youth, that Lincoln actually started. "Speed," he exclaimed, "did Joshua ever tell you what fools we were about women?"

The Attorney-General shook his head.

"I suppose it's as well," sighed Lincoln. "Well, get on with the papers, Speed."

"I think," the younger man rubbed his head in perplexity, "I think, sir, you'd better let me read this to you, skipping the verbiage. The matter has gone out of Mr. Dana's hands into Secretary Stanton's and Mr. Stanton is angry and is hard after the case."

"I see! Go ahead but be as brief as you can." He closed his eyes and listened closely for ten minutes then interrupted to say, "The nub of the thing is that Baker's unearthed a scheme in which I am to be beguiled into issuing a permit to a man named Lazarre to trade in cotton in an illegal contract alleged to have been made with Hill Lamon, Leonard Swett, Thurlow Weed and others. Well, sir, I'll not issue the permit and that jostles the plan, if there is one, to an early and sterile death. What next?"

"The next step is to satisfy Mr. Stanton."

"Mr. Stanton can't be satisfied. He'll have to endure me and my little ways."

The Attorney-General rose. "Ward Hill Lamon ought not to embarrass you this way, Mr. Lincoln."

"He doesn't," said the President, "just to disregard grammar!"

However, as Speed went out, Lincoln pulled the bell rope and sent for Lamon. But he had worried through two hours' work before Hill arrived with apologies. He had been attending court.

Lincoln looked at him for a moment, then said quietly, "Hill, I want you to promise me to stay out of cotton speculations."

"I promise, sir," answered Lamon, readily. "May I know the whyfore of this?"

Lincoln paused. The war with all its forces so destructive of character was over. He believed that Hill had been, always, a man of integrity. If he had been weak for a moment, the cause of the temptation was removed.

"No, Hill, I reckon least said soonest mended in this—Do you know, I had the dream again, last night—that sobbing and the catafalque—"

"It's only a dream, Mr. Lincoln," exclaimed Lamon, "the fancy of an overstrained mind! When it comes, think of the happiest thing you know."

"Bob and Mary Harlan, for example!" smiled the President, turning back to his desk.

But as he ground on through the crowded hours he was always conscious of the shadow and conscious of a growing sense that he must meet and understand that shadow if he was to know peace. Somewhere, somehow, he must find an hour of loneliness and silence. He made a determined effort to cast the feeling of melancholy

out of his mind. Mary was not back from the hospitals when he ate his dinner. But she had left strict orders that the sitting room was to be locked during his meal there. He settled himself with a copy of Petroleum V. Nasby propped open against the water pitcher and at intervals for half an hour, Crook, out in the hall, the waiting crowd in the reception room and John Hay in his office three doors away, smiled in sympathy at the peals of laughter which percolated through the sitting-room walls.

Mary came back before he could return to his office and insisted that he go at once for his ride. He protested only mildly and shortly followed her voluminous lavender skirts down the staircase. The carriage was waiting—with the cavalry escort. Lincoln groaned as he lifted his hat to the salute and said to Mary as they whirled with a mighty clatter down the driveway, "Well, this crime against liberty won't be continued much longer, thanks to Grant and Sherman!"

In a few moments they drew up with a noisy flourish before the Harlans' door. Mary Harlan was waiting on the steps and explained that she was substituting for her mother who was nursing a sudden headache. While the President, uttering proper sentiments of sympathy for Mrs. Harlan, was delightedly handing young Mary into the carriage, Senator Harlan appeared.

He was a striking-looking man of forty-five, wearing the monotonous and obscuring beard of the period. But the features left uncovered, the straight nose and the large eyes, were singularly handsome.

After he had received their congratulations and felicitations over the great news from Grant, Lincoln turned his attention to the younger of the guests.

"Mary Harlan, is that your Easter bonnet?" gazing critically at a confection of pansies and apple blossoms.

"I thought you paid no attention to ladies' clothes, Mr. Lincoln!" Mary Harlan's dimple showed.

"I'm not sure as to that," he retorted, "'But I do know I always recognize spring when I see it and comment thereon, don't I, my dear?" smiling at his wife.

"Always!" agreed Mary Lincoln. "And it *is* spring, in spite of the weather! I'm taking you across the Eastern Branch. It's warmer down there and we may see dogwood."

"We couldn't see any if there were hedges of it with this army around us," grumbled the President. "Halloo! They've put guards on the old Navy Yard bridge!" as they approached that flat and unimpressive wooden structure. "When did this happen?"

"A month ago!" replied Harlan. "At least I was held up then, when taking a ride. I was told that some sort of a vague plot against the Administration had been unearthed in Lower Maryland."

Mary Lincoln's face changed color and the President said quickly, "Senator, when are you going to take over the Department of the Interior? You are badly needed in the Cabinet. I'm going to want men with the long view on capital and labor."

"In May, I shall be able to take the portfolio," replied Harlan. "I heard that Charles Sumner might be Secretary of State." His eyes twinkled. "How, may I ask, do you expect to get any work done with all the sound and fury in the Cabinet? Stanton and Sumner! Whew!"

"I'll pray like the man in the thunderstorm," replied Lincoln. "'O Lord, if it's all the same to you, give us a little more light and a little less noise!' We've lived through the war, so I'm certain we can weather through even Stanton and Sumner on Reconstruction. As a matter of fact, Stanton is not so dangerous a fighter as

Charles Sumner. He's not so egotistical. Stanton is all bark and no bite— Well"—as every one smiled—"a little bite!"

"He's fiendish in his office," said the Senator. "But I contribute for what it's worth the fact that I saw him playing mumble peg with Major Eckert, this morning, about six o'clock. Stanton said they were practicing the arts of peace!"

"I'd say his powers of expression were limited," commented Mary Lincoln, eagerly scanning the roadside for signs of spring blossoms.

"Speaking of powers of expression," mused Lincoln, "you ought to read a letter Mrs. Lincoln received this morning from Bob, to assure her he was safe. There wasn't one word—" His wife pinched him. "What have I done now?" he demanded.

Mary Harlan's eyes twinkled. "How *is* Bob?"

Lincoln began again. "As I was trying to explain, one had to read between the lines to understand that his heart—"

"Now that the war's over, Mr. Lincoln," interrupted Mary Lincoln, firmly, "aren't you going to hurry Bob out of the army and make him get on with his law work?"

"Judging from his present aspirations," replied the President with a broad smile at Mary Harlan and a wink at her father, "we shan't have to do any *hurrying* and *making*."

The young girl blushed from the tip of her chin to the white line of parting in the soft hair under the forget-me-not bonnet. Lincoln eyed her with frank delight. There was to him something infinitely sweet that with the ending of the war's four years' nightmare should come Bob's charming love affair. It renewed one's faith in the legality of happiness. For a long, long time it had seemed as if nothing were legitimate but grief. He

looked down at his own Mary. She was far lovelier as Mary Lincoln, the mother of a grown son, than she had been even as a bride. Life with all its agonies had been becoming to her.

He caught Mary Harlan's eye and smiled.

"Bob," she said, dimpling, "has inherited your beautiful teeth and smile, Mr. President!"

"Good gracious!" he ejaculated. "Some one has discovered a good point in this grizzled old front of mine. I'll have to make note of that for the cartoonists—especially those fellows in *Punch*."

"I'll never forgive any of them," exclaimed Mary Lincoln.

"Nor I," agreed Senator Harlan with sudden grimness.

Lincoln was surprised and touched. "Give yourselves no uneasiness over any of those old malignities," he said. "I've endured a great deal of ridicule without much malice and have received a great deal of kindness not quite free of ridicule. I am used to it."

No one spoke for a moment. The carriage was moving slowly up Good Hope Hill and tried to turn out of the heavy clay to make way for two men on horseback. Both were young and elegantly clad, though mud spattered. One of them bowed, taking off his hat. The other glared at Lincoln like a malevolent young tiger.

"Those are the actors, John McCullough and John Wilkes Booth!" exclaimed Mary Harlan, staring excitedly as the two passed and craning her neck to follow them down the hill.

"Which was which?" asked the President. "One of them looked mad about something. I reckon he doesn't share your enthusiasm for my smile, Mary Harlan."

"That was John Wilkes Booth," replied the young

girl. "Isn't he lovely? I suppose he was deep in a part and never saw who was in the carriage."

"Let's hope he had some excuse for his insolence," sniffed Mary Lincoln.

Lincoln leaned back and allowed both eyes and fancy to wander over the fields. "Nothing so hits the normal spot in a man as the sight of a farmer plowing," he said. He was silent for a moment, then went on, "I'm trying hard to think of a poem that'll do justice to this occasion. One part of my mind quotes:

> "For God's sake, let us set upon the ground
> And tell sad stories of the death of kings

And then I think of poor Jeff Davis and go on:

> How some have been deposed; some slain in war;
> . . . ; some sleeping killed;
> All murdered; for within the hollow crown
> That rounds the mortal temples of a king
> Keeps death his court and there the antic sits
> Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp—"

He paused and stared at the Maryland countryside, thinking of Davis and his frustrated dream of glory.

Harlan ventured to break the silence. "Of course, you'll be obliged to hang Jeff Davis."

Lincoln started, turning on the Senator gray eyes in which the reminiscent light suddenly was quenched. He leaned toward Harlan and said quietly but with all the finality at his command, "Not another man from this day forth shall die for his connection with the Rebellion, if I can prevent it. Senator, you spoke as if you *wanted* Davis to hang!"

The man from Iowa stiffened. "If we don't treat the leaders of the Rebellion as traitors always have been treated, this Union never will be safe from attacks with-

in. Davis and his satellites must hang, deeply as I deplore it."

"No, they shall not hang!" Lincoln sighed and observed for the first time that the April wind was cold. "They shall live and suffer what is more painful than hanging; that is regret! The sense of failure will choke their ambitions for the rest of their days. That's punishment enough. That's the punishment of God which no man can escape."

"I believe public opinion will not permit you to save Davis," reiterated Harlan.

Mary Harlan suddenly leaned forward to put a small white gloved hand on the President's knee. "And what quotation is in the other part of your mind, dear Mr. Lincoln? We can't bear to have you look so tragic."

He laid his great palm gratefully for a moment over her little fist.

"The other part of my mind, Mary Harlan, is as festive as a young lamb skipping among the daisies. It says:

> " 'O Mistress mine, where are you roaming?
> O stay and hear! Your true-love's coming. . . .
> Trip no further, pretty sweeting,
> Journeys end in lover's meeting—
> Every wise man's son doth know.' "

The younger Mary looked at the older Mary. "He must have been a wonderful lover."

"He *is* one," returned the elder. "He has improved with the years."

"Hear! Hear!" chuckled Lincoln.

"What other nice thing is in your mind, sir?" urged Mary Harlan.

"A dream of California," replied the President, leaning back once more and closing his eyes. "A dream of a

new life in California. I know a poem about California by Walt Whitman."

"Now, no more poems from *him,* Mr. Lincoln," protested Mary Lincoln. "I don't like his implications—"

"There's nothing about California in that poem, anyhow," volunteered Mary Harlan.

"Daughter, are you admitting you've read Whitman? He's an indecent rubbish-monger. I certainly can't permit that!" Senator Harlan's face was flushed.

"But, father dear," began Mary, "he doesn't compare with the Old Testament for—"

"That's enough, daughter! We'll not compare the Bible with 'Leaves of Grass.'"

But she was by no means suppressed. "And yet you swear by Robert Burns, father!"

Lincoln roared with such spontaneity of amusement that even Harlan joined him. But the Senator quickly sobered to say, "Nevertheless, if there were more young people buying the Bible and fewer buying 'Leaves of Grass' it would be better for the state of the country."

"That reminds me of a little story about Bible selling!" exclaimed Lincoln. "A certain Bible peddler was making his rounds through the frontier woods when he came on a poor little cabin chock full of children. The mother appeared to be working hard but it was evidently one of those households where nothing but dirty dishes and unmade beds thrive. The peddler saw at once that here was a field for work and after he'd talked to the mother a little while about her soul's salvation, he asked her if she owned a Bible.

"She was right mad and indignant. She told him they might be poor but they weren't heathen. The peddler urged her to show him the Book. She started at once to search; on the rafters, under the eaves, in the chimney closet, under the bed. Then she called the children in

and they rooted the cabin out. At last, the biggest of the young ones dug from the débris under the bed, a few tattered leaves of the Book of Job. The peddler was horrified but the mother didn't budge an inch. 'I knew,' she said, 'that we'd *had* a Bible, though I had no idea we were so near out.' "

Once more laughter filled the carriage. Then Mary Lincoln, testing the weather with her glove off, announced that they must turn toward home at once. During the remainder of the drive, the two men discussed the problems of the Department of the Interior, from the Indian unrest to the opening of new lands in the West.

CHAPTER XIII

FONDLY DO WE HOPE

WILKES BOOTH and John McCullough returned to the city shortly after the President and his friends. As they dismounted before the hotel, Atzerodt, who was waiting to take the horses to the stable, told Wilkes that Mrs. Surratt wished to see him. Leaving McCullough, Wilkes at once went round to the house on H Street. Mrs. Surratt, a big, raw-boned woman of forty-five, closed the door of the parlor and said in a low voice:

"I can tend to that business of yours to-morrow or next day if you'll loan me your horse and buggy. I have to go out to Surrattsville in reference to some money due me on land my husband sold." She picked up a white silk mitt she was knitting and seated herself before the fire.

"I'm sorry!" exclaimed Wilkes. "Atzerodt sold the buggy outfit yesterday. But I'll let you have ten dollars to hire one with."

"Thank you!" She knitted rapidly, a competent figure in heavy mourning. She must have been handsome once but there was something austere and hard about her now which repelled Wilkes. The only touch of softness he'd ever seen in her lay in the fact that she invariably wore at her throat a brooch containing a photograph of her husband.

"Have you heard from your son?" asked Wilkes.

"A telegram. He's in Montreal and has reported to

Jacob Thompson. The Canadian helpers left on the 8th."

Wilkes moved impatiently. "Then they may not be here in time. I shall strike whenever the iron is hot. Shoot to kill."

Mrs. Surratt looked up at him. "You've actually reached *that* point?"

Wilkes threw back his beautiful head and thrust his fingers into the breast of his short riding coat. "I have!"

"Do Payne and Atzerodt know?" asked Mrs. Surratt.

"Not the fool of a German, certainly. But I'll tell Lewis Payne. He'll be with me to the hilt."

Mrs. Surratt nodded. "Let me repeat your errand, then. A slip in the slightest detail may cost you your life. John and Atzerodt a month ago placed at our tavern in Surrattsville two carbines with ammunition, a monkey wrench and a rope, telling Lloyd, our renter, to hide them until needed. You wish me to check Lloyd to see that the articles are within quick reach and tell him that it's you who'll demand them."

"Precisely! And be sure you identify me to him."

"Oh, he knows you by sight, I'm sure. But I'll take care. I plan to have Weichmann drive me out and back. It's no trip for a woman alone, these days. He's such a fool that he has no suspicions. Will you stay to supper?"

"Yes, thank you," replied the actor. "But I must leave immediately after to break the news to Lewis Payne."

But after the evening meal, a girl friend of John Surratt called bringing a letter she had received from him and Wilkes delayed to read this. Then Weichmann came down to the parlor demanding music and Wilkes and Miss Ward obliged with some duets. Later Wilkes recited poetry for them and so it was well on toward

ten o'clock when he left the house. He felt more desire for drinking than for an argument with Payne so he returned to his room at the hotel and ordered a rum toddy.

While Booth was reciting poetry at the Surratts', Lincoln was receiving a guest whom he was exceptionally glad to see, not so much for reasons of state as for the fact that he earnestly desired to ask this man a question. When John Hay announced Henry Ward Beecher, Lincoln laid down his pen with a sigh of relief. As if, he told himself, the doctor had come at last!

Beecher was a little more than fifty at this time, a striking-looking man, clean shaven in an age of whiskers, with the orator's mobile lips and with eyes of searching intelligence. He wore his iron gray hair, which was very thick, brushed straight back from his forehead. It gave him a very wide-awake appearance, the President thought.

"Well," said Lincoln as they shook hands, "you've ceased cursing me regularly in the *Independent*. What do you do for a staple victim now? I remember the fearful things you said in '62 or '63. They taught me to ignore that kind of criticism."

Beecher's smile was a little twisted as he seated himself on the opposite side of the grate. "We ordinary mortals didn't understand your magnanimity, Mr. Lincoln. You're heaping coals of fire on my head by sending me down to Fort Sumter."

Lincoln grinned. "I wanted the best man for the job! Fort Sumter stands in the public mind as the occasion of this terrible war. That's where the old flag received the first official shot and dropped in shame. I want you to rear it again, Beecher, but not in pride. Rear it in humility. For take it anyway you will, this war has been a humiliating thing."

"I will be humble," agreed the preacher, "but I can't

agree that there's been *no* glory in this war. Where in the history of the world has a people ever risen against their own blood to set black men free? Don't tell me that the freeing of the slaves was not glorious, sir!"

"I have no notion of being so foolish," returned Lincoln, looking at Beecher with eyes in which the four years' story of the Civil War was written. "Nevertheless, don't boast down there. Be as chivalrous, as gentle and as magnanimous as the event demands."

Beecher, reading the wordless sorrow in those eyes, said with unwonted modesty, "I wish you'd make the address, sir—you who've borne the brunt of battle. Don't protest, I beg of you. When I think of your unparalleled burdens during these four bloody years, when I think of your patience and fortitude and your disinterested wisdom—"

"Don't! Don't!" begged Lincoln. "The credit goes to Grant and Stanton and to a million others. You must make the speech. I'm not so competent as you and I mustn't leave here anyhow. My job right now is to save Jeff Davis' life—his and Stephens' and all the rest of those mistaken dreamers. Stanton's gone entirely crazy. He's as bad as anybody, hollering that we must hang three or four leaders in every seceded State. Stanton's my chief care, outside Andy Johnson." He watched Beecher keenly.

The preacher shook back his hair with a gesture half of impatience, half of disbelief. "Surely in your long intercourse with Edwin Stanton, sir, you've learned to look behind his bitter tongue! He doesn't mean that."

"He means just that," said Lincoln, quietly and deliberately. He knew there was friendship between the famous preacher and the Secretary of War and he wanted Beecher to use his influence, if he had any.

Beecher resolved his mind of that doubt by saying,

"I understand Stanton better than most men do, though I never knew him until a few months ago. I came up Wall Street one day and met a friend who told me that he'd just got back from Washington and that Stanton couldn't hold out much longer. He was breaking down. Well, it struck me all in a heap. I walked into one of those offices in Wall Street and said, 'Will you allow me pen and ink?' And I wrote him just what I'd heard. That he was sick and desponding. But that he must not despond. The country was saved and if he didn't do another thing, he'd done enough. I sent the letter and in a few days I got his reply. It it had been from a woman answering a proposal it wouldn't have been more tender. And when I went to Washington to meet him, he was as tender as a woman, as a lover."

Lincoln's eyes moistened. "Yes, he's shown me that side, too. But don't be deceived, Mr. Beecher. There's nothing tender in his thoughts about the Rebel leaders. He's a wolf!"

Beecher looked affronted for a moment then his face cleared. "I shall go talk to him and try to prove you're mistaken, Mr. Lincoln."

"That's precisely why I brought the subject up. I hoped you'd do just that," smiled the President. He took out the paper knife and ran it through his hair and unbuttoned his vest with a long sigh. "Well, so we've rounded the circle of Hell and have come back to Fort Sumter again! I'll never forget the travail of spirit with which I came to the determination some four eternities ago this month to provision that fatal place." He looked out the window and tried once more to realize that the circuit *had* been completed. But in place of that realization came again the thought that Beecher would give him the help he needed. He turned back to say

abruptly, "Mr. Beecher, do you believe in a future life? I've been thinking about that a good deal lately."

"Do you mean you've been thinking about future life or earthly death?" asked Beecher. The indefinable air of the minister of the gospel suddenly changed their relationship. It was no longer citizen deferring to the Chief Executive but pastor instructing parishioner.

"I suppose, as a matter of fact," confessed the President, "I've been searching for 'intimations of immortality.'"

Beecher nodded. "People can no more help being always conscious of the surge of death on the shores of life than those who dwell on the seashore can ignore the sighing of the ocean on the beach. Especially after one reaches forty is one conscious of the other world beating, as it were, on this."

"Then there is another world?" asked Lincoln.

"When a man dies and you go to his funeral you say," Beecher got up and began to stride around the Cabinet table, "you say, a man is dead. But the angels say, a man is born."

"Angels!" eaculated Lincoln. "Do you believe in *that* kind of an hereafter, Mr. Beecher?"

"Why not?" demanded Beecher. "Does it matter by what name we call the inhabitants of heaven? Yes, I believe in heaven, Mr. Lincoln, and I know how to get there, too."

"I'd give ten years of my life to have that conviction," said the President. "How do you propose to make the transit?"

"By following Christ, Who is perfectly definite. He said, *I am the way.* Christ *knew.* His is the final authority for who but God would say, *I am the road. Press me with your feet.*"

Beecher spoke in tones indescribably thrilling. Lincoln

felt his weary pulses quicken. And yet, he told himself, it was only such a thrill as he got when Hamlet spoke through Booth. Was Abraham Lincoln doomed to be only an onlooker at all men's faiths?

"I believe absolutely in God," he said, finally, "but for the rest, Beecher, I reckon I'm caught on a spiritual sand-bar."

Beecher's face lighted. "I know just what you mean! Last fall I was on a huge Government steamer on the Ohio. We were so big that the pilot made no ventures out of the known channel. The water was falling fast and we saw that the craft which had ventured were in trouble, even small boats. In one place several rafts were caught on a sand-bar. But our pilot swung as close to them as he dared and our wake flooded every one of the little boats free! I don't know whether I'm a big enough craft to flood you off, sir! You see these were little fellows and you don't come in that category!"

"I know those sand-bars and snags! There's an infinite number of allegories in them. The Mississippi River enriched my life in more ways than one." Lincoln looked at the preacher thoughtfully. He'd never been able to pin any well-educated Christian down to a definite statement about his belief in heaven. But the folks he'd known back in Indiana who could scarcely write their own names had a concreteness that would defy the pope.

"If you preachers," he said aloud, "could give your congregations an absolute confidence in immortality they'd follow you by any route you'd tell 'em, however hard. That would float me or any man off any spiritual sand-bar."

Beecher jerked his head impatiently. "But don't you see that if you believe in God, the rest must follow? He will give you confidence. No mere man can do that. It

lies between you and your Maker, a relationship on which even a clergyman cannot intrude."

Lincoln felt definitely checked. Beecher had nothing for him. His pretty baubles for women couldn't be magicked into red meat for a hungry man. "I'm just naturally a mere onlooker, I suppose. You mustn't take me too literally. I reckon my spiritual curiosity got the best of me," he sighed.

"You belittle your soul-strivings when you speak so," protested the preacher. "Why trouble about heaven? If God were real enough to you, you'd leave all that to Him. And you know, He *is* real. You meet Him constantly, and recognize Him, just as when you pass an open window and hear some one playing the piano, you say, I recognize that! It's a Beethoven Sonata. So in life you recognize strains of God—in a child's innocent affection, in a lover's glow, in a mother's self-denying love."

"Yes! Yes!" stirring uneasily. "You had your mother through your boyhood, Mr. Beecher, to manhood?"

The preacher shook his head. "She died when I was three, so she's been only an angel to me, all my life until a few years ago. Then I found among a packet of old letters in my father's study a bundle of my mother's letters to him. They began with their first acquaintance and continued into their married life. And as I read those, Mr. Lincoln, at last I knew my mother! What the four Gospels are to the life of Christ, those letters are to my mother's. I remember there was one letter in which she spoke freely and frankly of her love. That to me is her Gospel of St. John's, which was God's love letter to the world."

Lincoln thought of a still, stiff form lying under a buffalo-robe in a long cabin in Indiana, with blunted

finger-tips resting on the coarse brown fur. He could recall the touch of those fingers when they had been alive, as vividly as if he were feeling them that minute. But he didn't see how any man could speak of his mother's intimate life as freely as did Beecher. Had his mother left love letters, he couldn't imagine himself reading them. He believed any average man would burn his mother's love letters unread. But perhaps a really great pulpit orator like Beecher must have the temperament which made such an act possible and proper.

He eyed the preacher wistfully. There was no doubt that Henry Ward Beecher had a sublime sureness. Beautiful face— What a family that mother of his and Lyman Beecher had produced!

"You look like your sister," said Lincoln. "She came down to see me, a while back. Had doubts about my sincerity with the Emancipation Proclamation. My stock has never been very high with your family, Mr. Beecher, I'm afraid."

"Don't say that!" protested Beecher. "Harriet came back from the interview your loyal friend."

"I blamed her and her 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' with making this war," laughed the President!

"You told her among other alleged facts," nodded Beecher, "that the war was killing you and you'd never live to see the end of it. Well, peace is here, Mr. Lincoln, and so are you! Your faith has been great save as concerns God's goodness to you."

"I've never doubted His goodness to me," was the President's sober reply. "What I do doubt is my own ability to judge what He means by goodness. I believe He was on our side during the war or we wouldn't have won. But I'm not sure what His attitude is toward me, the human being who four years ago released the spring which induced that mortar shot to drop on Fort Sumter.

Is my life completed? Why do I have this inner fear that it may be and why am I not reconciled?"

He knew as he spoke that as Beecher had intimated he was asking a question no human being should ask another, even a minister. Had his own intellectual honesty not given him that knowledge, the expression in Beecher's eyes would have warned him—that look of pained inadequacy which he had seen far, far too often in men's eyes when he gave them a glimpse of his inner starvation.

He relieved Beecher by rising before he could frame a reply, saying, "After all, that's important to no one but myself!"

"If Jeff Davis knew your attitude toward him and his fellow conspirators, he'd hope that your life certainly was not done!" exclaimed Beecher. "The answer is vital to the whole South! The North might fumble along without you, sir, but the South's very existence depends on Abraham Lincoln."

The President put a thin hand on the younger man's shoulder. "You go down to Fort Sumter, my boy, and put the flag back in her place with the sure message for the South that they who sow in tears shall reap in joy."

"I'll try, Mr. Lincoln," said Beecher humbly, and he went out, closing the door softly.

CHAPTER XIV

STANTON, THE LOVER

LINCOLN sat without moving after Beecher's departure. Outside the window, Washington was still celebrating. Band music, firecrackers, blank cartridges and the dull, unceasing roar of many voices floated through the window to his unheeding ears. He was reasoning with himself about his disappointment with Beecher, and he convinced himself shortly that he'd been preposterous in his demands on the minister. But the edge of disappointment did not dull. He was glad when the door opened, admitting the next contingent of visitors.

Fifteen men filed into his office and Hill Lamon, his eyes twinkling, introduced them.

"This, Mr. President, is a Confederate band which left Early's forces a couple of weeks ago, in order to pay its respects to you."

Lincoln now understood the twinkle in Lamon's blue eyes. He walked gravely forward and shook hands with the visitors. Then the leader, with his bearskin under one arm and a tissue-wrapped parcel under the other, cleared his throat, set his heels together and gazing at the President with the glazed eyes of one who with difficulty repeats from memory, made a short speech.

"Mr. President, on behalf of my fellow musicians, I wish to thank you for the great task you have finished in guiding the ship of state through four years of tornado to a safe port. We wish to assure you of our loyalty to

you and the Stars and Stripes. And we wish to present you with a slight token of our esteem."

Lincoln bowed and unwrapped the parcel and with difficulty refrained from bursting into laughter. From an enormous and elaborate silver frame a large engraving of his own worn face stared up at the President!

He cleared his throat. "Gentlemen, I thank you for this token of your esteem. You did your best! It isn't your fault that the frame is so much more rare than the picture. And I thank you for your words of praise. It pleases me that you came back to your loyalty to the Union before the Confederacy actually crumbled."

"Mr. Secretary Welles is waiting to come in, sir," said Lamon, and with the skill begot by intensive experience, he maneuvered the drum major and his flock out as Welles came in.

Lincoln thought the old man was looking ten years younger. The two shook hands smiling as the band marched down the hall, playing "Dixie." Then Lincoln said, abruptly:

"How do you stand on Jeff Davis, Mr. Welles?"

The Secretary of the Navy smoothed his beard, thoughtfully. "Try him for high treason before a civil court and if he's found guilty, let him pay the penalty. I'm for a speedy trial. But I agree with Seward that the Rebel State papers must be examined first, preferably by an able economist like Dr. Lieber. Seward wants a military commission to hold the trial and to include murder, with conspiracy to burn cities, in the other accusations."

Lincoln smiled sadly. "Poor old Davis!"

"I can't seem to pity him," drily. "He gasconaded the South into this trouble. He always was the great I am! Now let him pay." Welles blew his nose on an enormous silk handkerchief.

The two men were standing before the fire. The eve-

ning was cold. The yellow kitten began to claw her way up the President's leg and he stooped to loosen her claws and place her on his shoulder.

"We have a very nice tiger-striped cat at our house," remarked Welles. "She insists on sleeping on my feet at night."

"I've always liked cats," murmured Lincoln, his mind on the picture of Jefferson Davis fleeing for his life while Abraham Lincoln vainly extended his arms to stay his executioners. He felt tired and very old. The kitten sprang from his back to the Cabinet table and after sharpening her nails on the red felt covering, began to bat with a diminutive paw at a drooping spray of early lilacs. Tad must have placed them there.

"Davis must be allowed to run away," said the President.

"But why?" demanded Welles. "I don't think even Christianity demands that!"

"Suppose we lay aside any sentimental or ethical arguments," suggested Lincoln. "We all agree that our sole aim is to restore the Union. Will it aid or hinder us in that work if we kill off Jefferson Davis and his associates?"

The older man parted his coat tails and warmed his back at the blaze. "I think he ought to be tried. I'm not as blood-thirsty as Stanton. Cowards are always blood-thirsty, on paper!"

"I wouldn't call Stanton a coward," objected Lincoln.

"Perhaps not in so many words, sir. But in your heart you know he is. Do you know, he always carries a seven-inch dagger? I have little respect for anything about Stanton save his undoubted energy and his devotion to his job. He is intriguing against your reconstruction policies at this moment."

Lincoln looked down at Welles in surprise. "Why this renewal of hate, Mr. Welles?"

"Well," admitted the Secretary of the Navy, "it's the last trivial straw, I suppose. But a friend of mine went to Stanton at my urging and asked for a pass into Richmond. Stanton told him to go to hell."

"And your friend preferred Richmond, strangely! You should have sent him to me. The pressure on Stanton is tremendous and his nerves aren't his strong point."

"There's no pressure on *you,* of course! The man's an intriguer, sir, as you'll find shortly. He's playing with the radicals while he gives you his approval."

"Well, I'll just have to meet that when it comes," said Lincoln. "In the meantime, Mr. Welles, I want to ask you for a promise. I don't want you to give it now. Think it over. But when Jeff Davis comes up in the Cabinet meeting to-morrow, don't talk hanging."

Welles smiled ruefully. "Does this serve as notice that you're going to put the screws on us as you've been known to do before?"

"I don't want to have to," Lincoln smiled in return.

The Secretary sighed and walking over to the table opened his portfolio. "Here's a proclamation Seward and I agreed upon. It closes those ports in the South we haven't already got our grip on so that the Government may begin as soon as may be to impose and collect duties. Will you look it over, sir, and affix your signature."

Lincoln read the paper and then signed it with the remark that this was the kind of document he liked to issue. Welles thanked him and departed. It was a quarter past ten.

The noise in the White House grounds had been increasing all the evening and as Lincoln again took up his pen to begin work on the speech he had announced he

would make on the morrow, Parker, the guard on duty, came in to say that there were a good many Congressmen in the foreground of the crowd, demanding a speech from the President.

"I can't speak to-night, my child," exclaimed Lincoln. "I mustn't try to speak again until my thoughts are written down or I'll be misquoted by the papers."

"Yes, sir," said Parker, respectfully, closing the door. But he opened it shortly to deliver a note from Congressman Hooper saying he thought it advisable for Lincoln in person to dismiss the crowd which was growing unruly. The President reluctantly dropped his pen and followed by Parker crossed the hall to the familiar window in the state-bedroom.

It was very different from the morning crowd. He supposed many of its members had spent the day in drinking. There was a maudlin note in the shouts.

He leaned out of the window. And again to his surprise there was instant silence. Very clearly but gently, he explained to them that he must not speak until he had prepared his words. "And I'm very tired," he said. "You will go home now, won't you, and call on me again to-morrow evening?"

"You bet we will, Abe!"

"Hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree!"

"We'll bring you Davis' lousy scalp, Mr. Lincoln!"

"Draw and quarter the traitor and hang him in the Senate as a warning!"

Lincoln pulled down the window.

But the crowd was dispersing and he returned to his desk. In two more hours he completed his speech. He read it through, grunted, and walking across the room, threw the paper into the fire. Mary came in a moment later and ordered him off to bed. He obeyed her, gratefully, but he could not sleep and shortly he got up to sit

before the window. He knew he could not rest until he had thought out what he must say the next night.

He was fully aware that the people would expect him to make an address of thanksgiving and of gloating. But on these grounds he felt completely sterile; devastated like the country around Petersburg. His soul was the sepulcher of all the dead men North and South on whom four years ago Fort Sumter had loosed the dogs of war. Others could throw off the horror of the Rebellion, even those who had lost those dear to them but he could not now, nor, he knew, would he ever be able to do so. For his had been the final responsibility—his and Jeff Davis'. Before the ultimate judgment of God they must plead their cases.

He did not question the immediate ethics of the Northern cause. He never had wavered in his conviction that slavery was wrong. Nor that he had done his immediate duty in saving the Union. But deep within him was a disillusionment so profound that it had cut his joy in life at the roots.

If democracy had worked, if American democracy were anything more than an increase in material opportunity over anything the world had known hitherto, it never would have permitted slavery to exist, or finding it in existence at the founding of the Union, true democracy would have wiped it out in the writing of the Constitution. And again, though the fathers had proved weak, the sons, had their democracy been pure, would have ended slavery by compensated emancipation long before Abraham Lincoln had pleaded with them to do so.

Nay, democracy, which had been his soul's star, had fallen, leaving him lonely as no human being could endure to be. Democracy had been his mistress and she had turned prostitute. . . . Granted that under God the Union had been saved from immediate disruption, could

it be lifted from the dust and blood of men's lusts? Would they permit him to do so? . . . Democracy—the last, best hope of earth and America had besmirched her. Democracy, that yearning of man's spirit to grow to its full, unhampered by tyranny; surely it was the finest flower of human aspirations. But it was only an aspiration, never to be realized. Never! . . . God Almighty! for four years Abraham Lincoln had been head butcher of a slaughter-house! . . . Nay, it could not be so! Not Lincoln! Not the boy, the man, who had hated death since his memory began! Since when? He knew precisely. He had not understood death until he saw his beautiful mother lying rigid in the cabin. Now with eyes wide on the crackling fire he saw again the mud-daubed fireplace, the red-checked table cloth, the bark-covered stanchions of the bed, the red blankets and the buffalo-robe on which lay her hands. Sometimes in his dreams, several times of late, he had seen those hands and had tried to clasp them around his neck as of old. . . . Strange death, so icy, so stiff, so indifferent! Death, the terrible! His first real tears had been shed then when he was nine; a man's tears, for his mother. The great drops were running down his cheeks now. Here! This was childish! He was as bad as a morbid woman! He wiped his face and came resolutely back to his speech.

The people must do their own rejoicing. For him—the job of putting the Union again on its legs. He would give a plain talk on methods. The newspapers would report it. Folks would say he was disappointing and would talk about the speech to prove that it was disappointing and perhaps one man in a thousand would thus imbibe its purpose. Ought he to speak of his scheme of colonization for the negroes? If he could enveigle the majority of the colored people to move to South America or Africa onto territory bought by America and deeded

to them on some plan by which they could take it and self-government over as fast as they made the land support them, would not some such scheme be the one sure road to the negroes' best happiness? They never could be accepted on equal terms by Americans (O democracy!) and no human beings could be happy who were despised socially. Moreover, if the supply of labor were reduced by colonizing the black labor out of the country, by precisely so much would the demand for and the wages of white labor increase. With colonization or the prospect of it, the carbuncle on the social elbow of the South would be lanced and a single generation would see it healed.

The rain had set in again, but gently. He loved the sound of it on the portico roof. Rain on the lilac hedges below—the prairies were flushing green out yonder on the Mississippi.

But he would not mention colonization in to-morrow's speech. No use making folks craw-bound with too many ideas at once! He chuckled suddenly as he recalled Tad stuffing his pet turkey with corn until its neck looked like a red gourd and of the boy's calling in Dr. Stone to aid the bird's digestion. But there was no doctor on earth who could relieve a people over-stuffed with political expedients.

The speech must be merely a plain reiteration of methods of restoring the Southern States to active participation in the Federal Government, the methods he had found most practical, by actual experiment. Perhaps he'd better light the gas and get to work. He struck a match and blinked at his watch. It was half-past twelve. The guard at his door must be changing for he heard loud whispers in the hall. Then the door was thrust open without the courtesy of a knock and Mr. Stanton rushed in accompanied by the guard.

"Whew!" the Secretary gasped. "I had a nightmare about you, Mr. Lincoln. All right, Smith, get out!"

"Must have been realistic to have brought you over this time of night, Mr. Stanton," said Lincoln, gently. "My dear friend, you mustn't carry me on your heart as a woman carries her first born!"

"You're about as irresponsible as a baby," snapped Stanton, crossly.

"I'm behaving in an exemplary manner," protested the President. "Now admit it and have a glass of buttermilk with me. Who's going to chaperon *you* back home through the dark? Shall I?" his eyes twinkling.

"I can take care of myself, because I admit I'm scared, Mr. Lincoln." Stanton unbuttoned his overcoat, revealing his night-shirt tucked into his pantaloons, and poured himself a glass of buttermilk, after which he replenished the fire.

Lincoln watched him, smiling. Queer Stanton, about whom both Welles and Beecher were right!

"I'm scared, all right," admitted the President, warming thin, bare shanks, gratefully. He'd forgotten the fire. "I suppose neither you nor I would have made good soldiers, Stanton. We'd have been leg cases, sure as guns. I've got a whole file of 'em. Fellows who've run away. I've never had one of 'em executed. Always told myself, it might have been Lincoln—or Stanton—or Seward—or McClellan!"

"You've done your utmost to destroy discipline in the armies, I know that," grunted the Secretary of War. "Why in hell aren't you in bed, saving your strength?"

"I have queer dreams. Bed's no comfort to me," replied Lincoln simply. "And when I'm awake, my mind's no comfort to me either. I suppose it never will be again —'Now farewell, tranquil nights!'"

Stanton's great dark eyes, always difficult to read

through his spectacles, studied the President deliberately. "You ought to be the happiest man on earth, Mr. Lincoln. To quote Othello further, 'you have done the state some service and they know't.' To the state, I might add the world and humanity—History will remember! You're tired. Nothing could show me so well how played out you are as this. Your mind fails to take in the fact that the war is over."

Lincoln walked across to the window and listened to the rain for a moment. Stanton set down his empty glass and in his carpet slippers, shuffled over to the President, there, to take his hand and pat it softly.

"Tired! Tired to the very core! Lincoln, I love you!"

Lincoln could not speak, but he clung to the warm hand with an indescribable sense of comfort.

He allowed Stanton to lead him to the bed and to pull off the faded dressing gown and to tuck the bedclothes about him, the humor of the situation swamped by its tenderness. He closed his eyes at Stanton's command and with the Secretary sitting on the bed-edge, held to his fingers as to the one hold on reality. Reality—was death the only reality? . . . Jesus Christ, the one true democrat the world had known?—Stanton's hand was very muscular— Nothing of the woman in this touch—aye but the lover too—rain on the young wheat out there on the Sangamon—'the early lilacs became a part of this child'—

CHAPTER XV

THE ELEVENTH OF APRIL

WILKES BOOTH wakened early the next morning in spite of the fact that he'd gone to bed the worse for brandy. He was ridden by an unease so extreme that even drunkenness did not give him rest. He required no spurring from Canada to urge him on with his designs. Whatever may have been Jacob Thompson's suggestions, to whatever degree of criminality the Confederate agent may have been willing to carry the war behind the lines, Wilkes did not require Thompson's promptings to change the idea of kidnaping to murder. Brandy and Booth's own egotism were sufficient motive-forces both to conceive and to execute the crime.

The frustration of all his ill-formed schemes had hurt his vanity. And to hurt the vanity of a nature like Wilkes' was to rouse it to a fury of resentment akin to insanity. The news of Lee's surrender had come to him less as a shock to his Confederate patriotism than as a final reason for punishing Abraham Lincoln. He could not now save the ravaged Confederacy but he could destroy the man responsible for the collapse. And far more important even than this, he could focus the attention of the world on John Wilkes Booth.

It occurred to him, while he was having his pre-breakfast drink, that there was no reason why he could not carry out practically alone the scheme he'd often heard discussed in Canada, that of clearing away not only the President but the Vice-President, the Secretary of State

and of the Secretary of War. Grant, he told himself, should be wiped out for good measure.

He ate lightly and went to call on Lewis Payne. Lewis, pale from his long imprisonment, was lying stretched on his bed, fully dressed. He sat up as Wilkes entered.

"Look here, Mr. Booth," he exclaimed, "I've got to get out or go crazy! Can't you do something to help me?"

"Yes, my friend," replied Booth, impressively. "You are to help me play Brutus to old Abe's Cæsar. In other words, I am going to kill the man who has destroyed the nation."

Payne rose from the bed uneasily. "I don't reckon you're called on to take any such step, sir. What good would it do now?"

"Supposing I shoot old Abe, you shoot Stanton, Atzerodt shoots Andy Johnson, and O'Laughlin kills General Grant? Don't you see that Mr. Davis and General Lee can at once take advantage of the confusion resulting, march on Washington and reverse the ending of this hellish war?"

Payne bit his nails and stared at Booth. The actor had never looked handsomer. His face was thin and drawn but his expression was one of complete exaltation.

"Don't try to understand, dear Lewis!" exclaimed Wilkes. "Trust me to see this with a larger vision than is possible to you. Trust me, my one and only faithful friend! Obey me blindly, thinking only of our country and what we are doing for her. I know, I *know,* that God has called me for this work. I strike for my country and her alone. A people ground beneath this tyranny pray for this end. Lewis, help me!"

The cadence of his beautiful voice was unbearably moving. Quick tears sprang to young Payne's deep eyes.

"I'll help you!" he said, huskily. "You'll take care of me?—see that it comes out all right?"

"Nothing shall harm you," replied Wilkes very earnestly. "Here, let's drink on it! Then I'll go find Herold and Atzerodt."

They did away between them with a bottle of brandy. A good deal too much for Payne, who admitted he'd had no breakfast. He now declared he was going up to Willard's Hotel and see General Lee whom he'd heard was being brought there a prisoner.

Booth shook his head. "Would you join the Yankees in staring at Uncle Robert's misfortune?" he demanded. "Lewis! No, you go over to Mrs. Surratt's for breakfast and I'll see you there, later. And don't forget you are your father, a Methodist preacher, up from Florida. You look the part in that eary-candle-light coat I bought you."

Lewis grinned boyishly and pulled on the black frock coat which did indeed give him a clerical appearance. Wilkes who had been consistently careful not to appear in public with his protégé followed him now until he saw Mrs. Surratt's door close on his great back.

He found George Atzerodt at the crude stable back of Ford's Theatre, currying the one-eyed bay. The roan was saddled, waiting for his exercise and Booth mounted him, bidding Atzerodt to throw the saddle on the bay and come along.

It was still but a little after nine when they rode slowly up Pennsylvania Avenue. The street was for the moment in only a normal state of confusion. Washington was resting while gathering energy for renewing the celebration later in the day. They passed the White House then by a circuitous route reached Seventh Street and ambled out toward the Soldiers' Home. The mud was deep and the going very slow. Booth said nothing

of his schemes until they had dismounted at the café at the foot of the hill. But established there at a table he plied Atzerodt with rum and then asked him how he'd like to have a share in a million dollars.

Atzerodt grinned and wiped his curly beard. His bloodshot blue eyes lighted up. "I'd given up hope of that. What's the news?"

"The news," whispered Wilkes, "is this." He leaned close to his fellow-conspirator's none too clear ear and rapidly outlined the butcheries he had planned.

Atzerodt rubbed his chin. "I hadn't reckoned on getting mixed up with any killing," he muttered.

"There'll be only Payne, Herold, O'Laughlin, possibly Surratt and myself to divide that million," whispered Wilkes.

"Is the get-away to stand? Same as Surratt and I worked out? Horses, boat and all?"

"Absolutely."

"When will the money be paid?"

"As soon as we reach the Confederate capitol, in gold," replied Wilkes with blazing eyes as he watched the German mind work.

"What does Herold do?" demanded Atzerodt.

"He acts as my helper because I've got to work against a man with body-guards. Your job will be simple. I'll get you a room in the Kirkwood House where Andy Johnson's living. You find out his room number and on the night yet to be agreed upon, you stab him in his sleep."

"Well," muttered the other, "I reckon I could do it if I was drunk enough and not too drunk."

"Good boy! Here's my hand on it. Now you continue as my groom until you hear from me. Have another drink."

On returning to the city, Wilkes called at the house on

H Street. He found Payne and Herold singing in the parlor with Anna Surratt. Weichmann and Mrs. Surratt were off on their errand for Wilkes at Surrattsville. Payne to Booth's satisfaction already had won David Herold's enthusiastic consent to "do anything to help dear Booth, follow him to heaven or hell!" Wilkes sat down at Mrs. Surratt's desk and wrote to Mike O'Laughlin in Baltimore telling him to come immediately to Washington.

There remained now only to choose the time and place of the various attacks. His imagination at once reverted to the Ford Theatre plan and he set off to discover what was the week's program there.

The people were surging up and down Pennsylvania Avenue in vast numbers. Governor Pierpont of Virginia told Mr. Lincoln when he reached the White House about nine o'clock that morning that the only way one could make progress along the main thoroughfares was to join a parade, for all of them sooner or later headed for the Executive Mansion.

"I reckon that's true," smiled the President, "from the sounds I've been trying to ignore all morning. Well, Governor, you can draw the administration of the sovereign State of Virginia out of your breeches pocket and level it now in the face of any man! I suppose you're planning to move out of Alexandria down to Richmond, at once."

"Yes, Mr. Lincoln," drawled Pierpont, taking the chair by the desk and returning the President's smile. "What attitude am I to assume toward the Rebel portion of the State?"

"I'm holding to my established idea, that those who take the oath of loyalty can go on with their interrupted functions of citizenship."

"Good!" the Governor nodded. "I have here, sir, a

list of men whom I want you to see personally; Virginians of old family, who left the Union reluctantly. If you can put these men at once in positions of authority, it will do more than an army to restore order in Virginia."

"That's the method!" exclaimed Lincoln, "and we must act before Congress can thwart us. My thought is that the general plan we used in Louisiana and Tennessee is sound but that in each State we must meet the special needs as they arise. We can't go very far wrong so long as our basic philosophy is reconciliation. I told General Weitzel to let the Confederate legislature of Virginia meet long enough to recall their armies from the field." He looked at Pierpont, expectantly.

"Has this been done?" asked the Governor.

"I haven't heard," replied Lincoln.

The Governor spread a great pile of papers on the table. "Anything to get people home again!"

"Peace will carry them back to their cabins—just as soon as they are freed from the army," declared the President.

"Peace—that passes understanding," said Pierpont in a low voice. "The peace of God."

"If we can compass it, we poor mortals," murmured Lincoln.

They spent three hours over the lists of names, not ceasing their labors until John Hay came in to say that the Cabinet members were waiting in the reception-room. But by that time, Lincoln told the Governor, they'd about set trembling, frantic old Virginia, on her feet again.

"Come to me next week, Governor, before you make the move to Richmond. I'll have some further ideas for you then." He rose to greet the incoming Cabinet.

All were present save Seward, who was represented by his son, Fred. After a short interchange of felicitations,

McCulloch, the new Secretary of the Treasury, brought forward the cotton question. There had been an enormous capture at Savannah and he was "embarrassed how to dispose of it." Lincoln listened without comment to the animated discussion which followed. Cotton had been a running sore ever since the war started but after all it was a minor ill now and would cure itself. He would let his mind sag, a little, while the Secretaries aired their views, with every one of which he was thoroughly familiar.

But Stanton roused him after a while by saying, savagely, "Andy Johnson was drunk again yesterday."

"How can you prove that?" demanded the President, sharply.

The room suddenly was very still.

"Did you see Johnson drunk?" Lincoln's voice was harsh.

"No, but I was told so by unimpeachable authority. You do yourself harm with the country by championing him, Lincoln."

"*Mr.* Lincoln," corrected Gideon Welles, loudly. "Is this a proper subject for a Cabinet meeting, Mr. Stanton?"

"It is, since Mr. Stanton has brought it up!" The President leaned forward over the table, his gaunt face working, his eyes full on Stanton's spectacles. "Andrew Johnson is *not* a drunkard. I've known him for years. He's a first-class man. I'm willing to go on the stand and swear he's not been under the influence of drink since that slip on March 4th."

"I'm in hearty agreement with Mr. Lincoln," said Secretary McCulloch. "I see a great deal of the Vice-President. He lunches on tea and crackers, as I do and he keeps no liquor in his suite. But, after all, as Mr.

Welles suggests, the personal habits of a Vice-President are not material."

"Nothing about Andrew Johnson can be immaterial," declared the President clearly, "as long as the threat of assassination hangs over me. But important or no, I want to say that this whispering campaign against him in the official family must cease!" He brought his fist down on the table.

There was an uncomfortable silence which Stanton himself broke by saying, briskly, "I suppose Sherman knows what to do with Jeff Davis when he digs him out from the present Rebel capitol at Greensborough. He should put the traitor in irons and send him up here to us. Unless you've already pardoned him, *Mr.* Lincoln."

There was deliberate insolence in his manner. But last night's memory of Stanton was keen in Lincoln's mind. Before Father Welles' indignation found words, he laughed quietly and remarked:

"Well, that's not in the realm of the impossible, either! Governor Pierpont and I had a debauch of pardoning this morning! It read like a roster of the First Families of Virginia. The old Dominion's almost ready to break bread with us again. I hope every head of every seceded State will come to me the same way. That's the way to handle the Rebels. Reminds me of a little story.

"Years ago a lot of young folks out in Indiana got up a Maying Party. They found an old scow on the river-bank and paddled themselves over to a little island that wasn't much more than a sand-bar and there they fixed their supper, planning to come back by moonlight. Well, they enjoyed themselves and at moon-up went to paddle home. Only to discover that the scow had floated off!

"There was a lot of giggling and gabbling then with some of the girls crying. But the stream wasn't very

deep and finally one fellow suggested that every young man hoist the girl of his choice to his shoulder and wade to the bank with her. That tickled everybody and with the girls laughing and protesting, but clinging like wild-grape vines, the crossings were made until there remained on the sand-bar only a very small, puny young man and a very tall and hefty old maid.

"Now, you see that's the way it's working out with Davis and me. The folks with these pardon petitions are going to get one Rebel after another out of this unhappy situation until there's only Jeff and me left on the island. And I'm afraid he won't consent to carrying me over and I'm afraid you people will make trouble about my carrying him, if he consents."

Every one laughed, including Stanton. Then Lincoln added, soberly. "It's more than likely to happen! There are worse men than Jefferson Davis and I wish I could see some way by which he and the people would let me get him over."

"I think we can trust General Sherman to deal adequately with the preliminaries," said Secretary Speed.

"Does any one know Sherman's feelings with regard to the Rebels?" asked Welles.

"His brother's speech in the Senate was clear enough as to how *he* stands," said Stanton. "John Sherman is a statesman. He says there should be no terms granted. That we should not only brand the leading Rebels with infamy but the whole rebellion should wear the badge of the penitentiary so that for this generation at least no man who has taken part in it would dare to justify or palliate it."

Lincoln looked from one face to another while Stanton quoted these sentiments. There was, he thought, not a man at the table who did not in his heart agree with Senator Sherman.

"General William Sherman doesn't agree with his brother," said the President, slowly. "He told me that night on the *River Queen,* before the last drive on Richmond that the South is broken and ruined and appeals to our pity. That to ride the people down with persecutions and military exactions would be like slashing away at the crew of a sinking ship. He said he'd fight as long as they fought but when they gave up, and asked for quarter he'd go no further. I'm going to tell you frankly that I'm with the General and not with the Senator in this. Is there more business to come before the meeting?"

Fred Seward remarked somewhat hesitatingly that his father thought he ought to lay before the Cabinet letters which had been received by him during the President's recent absence at the front. They were from the American consuls in London and Liverpool and gave detailed reports of a conspiracy against the lives of Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Stanton, Mr. Seward, General Grant and General Sherman. The revelation of these plots had been made to the consul's secret agents, in Paris.

"How imminent is the danger?" asked Lincoln.

"Well," replied young Seward, "one letter states positively that two desperate characters sailed from Newcastle last month on a ship laden with war supplies for the Confederacy, to consummate the crime. They are to receive $5,000 each for the job. The consuls and my father are convinced that this menace is to be taken most seriously."

"Haven't I been telling you so?" shouted Stanton, his face a greenish-white. "Where there's so much smoke there's bound to be a fire! And you do nothing, Mr. Lincoln!"

"But what would you have the President do?" demanded Secretary Welles, rubbing his handsome nose.

"Shall he barricade himself in his office and do business through iron bars and over a loaded howitzer?"

"*You* haven't been threatened, sir," retorted Stanton, "or you'd not be flippant. And if the President had any imagination—"

Lincoln smiled. "I have enough at least to keep the goose flesh roused! You have copies of those letters, Mr. Seward? Then give one set to Mr. Stanton and the other to Mr. Lamon. I don't know what better action to take."

"I'm sorry to have had to intrude it on such a day as this," said young Seward, "but father thought the report was probably true."

"I don't doubt it's true," agreed Lincoln, the shadow for a moment darkening his vision. "Gentlemen, we'll meet at the same time to-morrow." He bowed and walked over to his desk.

As soon as he was alone, he locked the office door and went to work on his speech. He ate lunch in his office,—corn-meal mush and an apple. By mid-afternoon it was finished and he thrust the close-written sheets into his breast pocket.

Hill Lamon came in the moment the door was unlocked. With him was handsome John Usher, retiring Secretary of the Interior. Lincoln walked across the room to meet them.

"Well, Mr. Usher, I'm glad to see you! I've been wanting to hold you up to Lamon here as a model of relief from the whisker effect," smiling approval at Usher's smooth-shaven face.

He turned to Lamon. "If you knew, Hill, what an improvement it would be for you to get rid of those horse's tail on either side of your upper lip, you'd not sleep till it was done. Or at least, wax 'em and look ferocious!"

The young man smoothed the offending appendages tenderly. "I'll make a bargain with you, Mr. Lincoln! I'll shave when you do!"

"Now look here, Hill, if I shave, the people who've been calling me gorilla will think I've taken the appellation to heart!"

"I'm sure Stanton's regretted giving you that horrible name," protested Usher.

"I wonder if he has!" said Lincoln, thoughtfully. "Well, Hill, are you ready to start for Richmond?"

"Fred Seward—" began Lamon.

Lincoln lifted his hand. "Spare me! You fellows are going to unnerve me yet. Ding dong! Ding dong! You keep it up. If you can, without too much discomfort to yourself, let me forget. Here's your passport, Hill. See Weitzel quietly." He dropped his hand on Lamon's shoulder, slid it down his mighty arm and clasped his palm. "Good-by, Hill! God bless you." He gazed into his friend's familiar eyes, reading there a deep world of anxious affection. "God bless you, Hill!" he repeated. "I'll look for you by Sunday."

Without a word, Lamon wrung the thin hand and walked to the door but hesitated there and looked back. Lincoln waved his hand and then Lamon with dragging feet went out.

Lincoln sat down for a talk with Usher concerning Indian affairs. After the ex-secretary left followed a long interval, during which he shook hands with a stream of callers filing in an unbroken line past his door. At twilight, he went into his room to dress for supper. The Harlans were to be there. Mary followed him.

"My dear, won't you lie down for fifteen minutes? You look so frightfully tired and the evening's going to be hard. Crook is guarding you from interruption in the

hall and I'll guarantee no one will break through my door!"

"Perhaps I will," said Lincoln, suddenly aware of his aching nerves. "I'm glad to see you in white again, Mary, like what you have on. But I admit I prefer you in gay colors. How long—"

"My dear," protested Mary, but gently, "after all, I have buried a son and I have lost two brothers in battle, since I came to Washington."

"I know, my darling! I know! But we've been too sad. We must be gay once more!" He looked at her wistfully. Could she out of her fund of wit and former gayety *will* the shadow from him?

She smiled up at him. "I shall get a new pink, *very* pink gown, my dear, for myself, and a red necktie for you! In the meantime!" she led him to the sofa under the south window and when he had stretched out with a sigh, she spread a crocheted cover over him, kissed him and closed the door noiselessly.

The shadow settled deeper. "I know what you are," he muttered, "you're *death-fear.* All these warnings have shown you up. Abraham Lincoln, you're a coward!" He lay for a moment breathing deeply, staring with inner eye at the shadow. Death-fear?—No! only horror, only reluctance to go. Reluctance! A thousand times that mild term! He must not, could not go until his job was done. Four years from now, perhaps—

He jerked his head uneasily. Why not be honest? Would he be ready to go in four years? Hamlet knew the answer.

> "—Who would fardels bear,
> To grunt and sweat under a weary life
> But that the dread of something after death
> That undiscovered country from whose bourn
> No Traveler returns. . . ."

He murmured the words slowly. "That *undiscovered* country—" Aye, there was the rub. Whither? Beecher had failed him. Yet Beecher was sure—and Beecher had an intellect as keen or keener than his own. Faith was fact, to the preacher. If only it were so to him! Could he see immortality as Beecher saw it, why then the bare bodkin might pierce when it would and find him content.

Harlan was a strong churchman. Did Harlan believe in heaven? What did the men in his Cabinet, what did all these people he saw daily think about it? Did they carry about in their hearts a shadow like his? He knew that they did not. He knew, had known all his life, that he was a marked man, a man set apart to feel strange influences, to know mysterious agonies of the soul.

What would Harlan say if he asked him the question he'd asked Beecher? Hand out platitudes from a creed of course. If he asked little Mary Harlan? The child would be frightened. It would hurt her sense of security in the scheme of things. No, this had got to be wrestled with alone. And God helping him, he would wrestle with it. He'd meet his doubts head on and conquer them. And thus find peace.

Death. He began by picturing himself as no longer existing, as no longer— He gave a great start.

Mary had come in and was lighting the gas. "I'm sorry to disturb you, dearest, but the Harlans are here," she said.

CHAPTER XVI

IN GLADNESS OF HEART

AT supper, Mary Lincoln wore white silk in full décolletage with a necklace of amethysts. Mary Harlan wore pink tarlatan and a wreath of moss roses crowned her soft hair. Mrs. Harlan, in ivory satin, showed as fine a throat and arms as did her hostess. The President gazed complacently at each charming woman and then said to Harlan:

"Senator, just what did you or I ever do to deserve this?"

"We didn't!" retorted Harlan, smiling. "But men are the fortunate sex."

"You can say that even after the last four years?" asked Mrs. Harlan. "I've been thinking quite the reverse."

"Oh, I'm sure men are the fortunate sex!" exclaimed Mary Harlan. "I'd love to be an officer like Bob and wear the gorgeous uniform. The sword-sash alone is worth the price—almost!"

"To say nothing of the sword!" interjected Mary Lincoln. "Think of the joy General Butler has had out of that enormous jeweled scythe he wears! I saw him walking up F Street on a slippery day this winter displaying all his regalia. Every one was grinning at him. He was too silly, strutting and slipping, his little fat tummy a foot ahead of his enormous nose and the sword behind like a kangaroo's tail! I'll show you."

She left her soup and by a miracle of mimicry instantly became Ben Butler, stumbling over his sword, swollen

with absurd pomposity. Her husband and her guests laughed delightedly and the President said as she caught her sweeping train up and returned to the table:

"What a long tail our cat's got to-night!"

Mary twinkled at Mrs. Harlan. "Mr. Lincoln's becoming an absolute connoisseur in ladies' dress. Though I must confess to you confidentially that he's often unfortunate in his choice of metaphor!"

"Come!" protested Lincoln, "you know how fond I am of cats."

"Worse and worse," sighed his wife. "Now when my old black mammy saw me in my first train—I won't say how many decades ago—she exclaimed, 'You-all sho is decked out like de Lawd's little sister!' "

"But she didn't speak so flatteringly about your first hoop-skirt," the President reminded her. "As I recall your story, she insisted you were wearing the devil's umbrella! And she was right. Hoop-skirts are the invention of Satan."

"I'm with you, there!" Senator Harlan agreed emphatically.

"I've heard they are going out in Paris," said Mary Harlan. "How immodest we're going to feel showing our—" She paused with a blush.

"Showing the world we have lower extremities?" smiled her mother. "Personally I'll be glad to have a silhouette less like a pyramid. Mrs. Lincoln, don't you wish the Directoire styles would return?"

"Not for me," replied Mary. "Only youth could become those slinking skirts.—And doesn't it seem queer to have reached the age where one must make such an admission? I can recall precisely, when I was Mary's age, how I looked on forty-five. I thought that life wouldn't be worth living then. And here I am, being dragged,

kicking and protesting, toward fifty yet still finding life worth while."

"Men *are* fortunate," mused Mrs. Harlan. "The mirror holds no terror for them at any age. And after a woman is thirty—"

"Yes, I know," agreed Mary Lincoln, quickly. "What I'm hoping to do is to find a philosophy which will reconcile me to wrinkles and gray hair."

"What *are* these women talking about, Senator?" Lincoln demanded. "Here you and I've been thinking that our wives outshine young Mary when they really get their blood up like to-night and they—"

"They are simply singing a requiem to hoop-skirts," interrupted Mary Lincoln briskly. "Well, let's hope that when crinolines go out, beards will gallantly accompany them!"

"This is an intensely personal conversation," complained Harlan, smoothing his handsome brown whiskers.

"Isn't it!" agreed Mrs. Lincoln, affably. "And such a relief after the topics of the past four years! Did you hear that some newspaper reporter had discovered that dear Mr. Gideon Welles in profile looks like that portrait of Marie Antoinette going to her execution and he's now known among the élite as Marie Whiskerette? What would the dear man say?"

"No one would be more amused than he!" exclaimed Lincoln. "In Cabinet meeting, last winter, he showed us a clipping from one of Orpheus Kerr's stories. It was to the effect that a dying soldier wanted his grandmother to come to see him. But there was no time to fetch the old lady, so some one asked Mr. Welles to impersonate her. The Secretary was very much flattered. Said he'd be glad to oblige but the fact was, he'd just bought Noah's Ark and was too busy fitting it up as a first-class monitor to leave. Welles enjoyed the jibe immensely."

"I'm relieved to learn that Orpheus Kerr has one reader beside my husband!" exclaimed Mary Lincoln. "I insist that a generation from now, Kerr's one claim to fame will be that my husband enjoyed him! It doesn't seem to me he's half as funny as Petroleum V. Nasby."

"Here! Here! I must 'arouze to wunst' on Kerr's behalf!" cried Lincoln, and he plunged into a defense of the peculiar form of humor which he claimed had helped to keep him sane through many a bitter hour. He quoted pages of the nonsense in proof of his point.

"What a memory you have, sir!" sighed Harlan. "I'd give anything for even half your power. I suppose it's a gift and one is born with or without it. Were you conscious of memorizing those excerpts?"

"No," replied Lincoln. "I always remember whatever moves me or deeply interests me. I suppose that we pioneer folks who were starved for literature developed a section of our brains you more fortunate citizens didn't need. When there was only one good book among twenty families, you learned it by heart as soon as your turn came. It's a great blessing. I suppose I could recite practically all of Macbeth if put to it. But I'm not unique. A number of my contemporaries out there on the prairies could do the same."

"I doubt that," said Harlan, smiling. "I wish more people realized with how wide a range of science and literature your mind is stocked."

"Hear! Hear!" cried Mary Lincoln. "Can't you have some handbills printed about it, Senator? I'd love to send some to—well, to Salmon P. Chase, for instance. He's so insufferably patronizing to my husband."

"I was thinking of Chase, myself," nodded Harlan. "He was talking to me to-day about—" The Senator paused awkwardly.

The President laughed softly. "About cotton-trading

permits for his particular friends, I suppose, and that led to a few biting generalities concerning my boorishness."

"He's going to make trouble, I'm afraid, about your decision against the trading." Harlan looked embarrassed as well as concerned. "He was asking my point of view, I'll admit."

"No, he won't make trouble," said Lincoln, calmly. "He'll make a lot of loud thunder, then he'll do what he's been told to do. It was always so when he was Secretary of the Treasury. He's like a boy I once saw at a launching. When everything was ready, they picked out this boy and sent him under the ship to knock away the trigger and let her go. At the critical moment everything depended on the boy. He had to do the job by a well-directed, vigorous blow and then lie still while the ship slid over him. The youngster did everything right but he yelled as if he was being murdered from the time he got under the keel till he got out. I thought the hide was all scraped off his back but he wasn't hurt at all! The master of the yard told me that this boy was always chosen for the job, that he did his work well, that he'd never been hurt but that he always squealed in the same way. That's just the way with Mr. Chase. I knew he wasn't hurt, that he was doing his work right and I paid no attention to his squealing. He only wanted to make us understand how hard his task was and that he was on hand, performing it."

"Nonetheless," said Mary Lincoln, when the laughter had subsided, "I can't forgive him for adding so much to the unpleasantness of your position by his incessant screaming. And he's still at it. Mr. Stanton's a good deal like him."

"Mr. Chase was a great Treasurer," mused Senator Harlan, leaning back in his chair as the butler removed his salad plate, "and Stanton on the whole has been a

competent Secretary of War. It's strange that Stanton should have been, for he's a narrow-gauge man. He has none of the qualities, for example, that made Jefferson Davis a brilliant success in the same job under President Pierce. A good deal of the success of the North undoubtedly has been due to the military foundations laid by Davis. Providence certainly moves in mysterious ways!"

"Davis wasn't merely a soldier," observed Lincoln. "He had a good many of the qualifications of the statesman. He saw this country with a large eye. Some day people will appreciate the broad scheme of road and railway surveys he put under way in the far West. Our grandchildren will be enjoying the benefits of Davis' broad vision while they scorn him as a traitor. He was the fellow who under the guise of military expediency insisted that a quick land route must be opened to California instead of depending on the trip round the Horn."

Harlan nodded, then smiled. "His camel-corps was a fiasco, though."

"What was that?" asked little Mary Harlan, as the four older people laughed.

"You've heard of General Beale?" replied her father. "Well, sponsored by Davis, he imported camels from Syria and proposed to move military supplies across the desert by caravan. It was a successful experiment. The camels were swifter and in every way superior to horses or mules, but the effort never got beyond the experimental stage."

"How picturesque!" exclaimed young Mary. "Why not?"

"Because something still swifter than those ships of the desert intervened," smiled the Senator. "The steam engine."

Lincoln gave a sudden shout of laughter. "Last time,

of the few times I talked with Jeff Davis, he told me the Indians and some of the guides out there on Beale's route swear that the camels which escaped into the ranges bred with the native animals and that they've actually seen a critter that's a cross between the camel and the Rocky Mountain goat."

"Poor Davis!" ejaculated Harlan when the table was quiet again.

"He has a lovely wife," contributed Mrs. Harlan. "I've heard that it is her ambition to be the first queen of the Confederacy which has given her husband certain illusions of superiority and have made real harmony impossible in their Cabinet."

"He was doomed not to succeed anyhow," said the Senator, "so long as he founded his government on slavery. It's his belief in slavery that'll hang him."

Lincoln spoke quickly. "Whenever they've wanted me to have a soldier shot, I've asked myself, Will this man serve his country better living or dead? You must ask yourself that question about Davis, Senator."

"But Jefferson Davis repudiated his loyalty to his country," protested Harlan. "He insists he's no longer a citizen of the United States!"

Mary Lincoln rose abruptly. "From the uproar on the lawns, I'd say that Mr. Lincoln had better show himself before the house walls are crushed in!"

"When we came," said Mary Harlan, "Tad was entertaining them as best he could. He was showing a series of transparencies in the window, of his own make, which he said told the history of the war in a hundred words."

"No!" ejaculated the President. "I must get him to repeat it for us, later."

A group of friends awaited them at the foot of the private staircase and after a moment of handshaking and felicitations, all followed Lincoln upstairs to the familiar

north window. He gathered himself together for the effort.

The mass of people was well illuminated by the lamps and lanterns which had been set in every window and along the roof and portico. It was raining and there were many umbrellas, which was disconcerting. But there were also many colored lanterns on poles and many sizzling torches. Brass bands blared.

Lincoln took from his breast pocket the fold of manuscript, opened it and lifting a candle from the sill held it beside the closely written pages. But some one reaching a long arm from behind the window-drapery took the candle and held it steadily for him. There had been an instant's hush as the President appeared. Then there arose such a detonation of cheers as he never before had heard. There was something terrible in this acclaim they were giving him. He endured it for a moment, then wiping the tears from his cheeks with a sweep of his coat sleeve, he began to speak. The moment his lips moved there was silence.

"We meet this evening not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart. The evacuation of Petersburg and Richmond and the surrender of the principal insurgent army give hope of a righteous and speedy peace, whose joyous expression cannot be restrained. In the midst of this, however, He, from whom all blessings flow, must not be forgotten. A call for a national thanksgiving is being prepared and will be duly promulgated. Nor must those whose harder part give us the cause of rejoicing be overlooked. Their honors must not be parceled out with the others. I myself was near the front and had the high pleasure of transmitting much of the good news to you; but no part of the honor for plan or execution is mine. To General Grant, his skillful officers and brave men, all

belongs. The gallant navy stood ready, but was not in reach to take active part.

"By these recent successes, the reinauguration of the national authority—reconstruction—which has had a large share of thought from the first, is pressed much more closely on our attention. It is fraught with great difficulty. Unlike a case of war between independent nations, there is no authorized organ for us to treat with —no man has authority to give up the Rebellion for any other man. We simply must begin with and mold from disorganized and discordant elements. Nor is it a small additional embarrassment that we, the loyal people, differ among ourselves as to the mode, manner and measure of reconstruction. . . ."

He read on, holding the attention of his audience but feeling that his hold was through its affections and not through any particular interest he aroused. But he persisted. This problem was one which must be brought home to the plain people. The only spontaneous applause he received was when he said:

"Twelve thousand voters in the hitherto slave-state of Louisiana have adopted a free-state constitution, giving the benefit of public schools equally to black and white and empowering the legislature to confer the election franchise upon the colored man."

Under cover of the applause, Wilkes Booth who, with Lewis Payne, was standing just below the window, snarled, "That settles it, the dirty dog! Shoot him, Lewis, where he stands!"

Lewis gripped the actor's arm. "Too risky here. Control your feelings, sir! I feel as mad as you do!"

"Mad!" Booth's low voice was full of unutterable hate. "If I had my pistol here, nothing could save him!"

"Hush, for the love of God!" pleaded Lewis.

The applause subsided and Booth with it, though he muttered, "It's the last speech he'll ever make!"

Lincoln, as he completed each page of manuscript, dropped it to the floor. Here Tad, scrabbling on all fours, picked up each as it fell and whispered, "More! More!" until Senator Harlan pulled the boy gently but firmly to his side. Here Mary Harlan put an arm over his shoulders and Tad remained contentedly quiet until his father's last word was spoken.

The President returned at once to his office. It was only nine o'clock and there were many people waiting for him. Among others were Representative Daniel Voorhees and Senator Lane. Voorhees caught Lincoln's arm as he passed through the reception room.

"This is a question of life or death within twenty-four hours, Mr. Lincoln."

"Come in," said the President wearily.

There filed in with the two Congressmen an anxious-looking man and a woman in a black silk shawl on whose white face horror struggled with self-control. The look was familiar to Lincoln. He seated himself and his callers, then waited. The story told by Lane and Voorhees was of an aged clergyman in Tennessee who after losing all in the war had sought to save himself and his family from starvation by supplying the Rebels with quinine and ammunition. He was to be shot on the morrow. The clergyman's daughter and her husband were petitioning for executive clemency on the ground that the old man was suffering from senile dementia.

Lincoln listened patiently but found it very hard to bring his mind to bear on the case. He was not unsympathetic but, he told himself, although the day had been an easy one on his brain it had been hard on his emotions and he reckoned that side of him was numbed with weariness. Voorhees was a good fellow and was doing his best but

it looked as if the poor old preacher had been guilty as Satan. The daughter perhaps felt a lack in the Congressman's presentation for suddenly clasping her hands she interrupted and began to talk rapidly, though with hard-won calm, of her father's record as a minister of the gospel. As she spoke, something pricked Lincoln's memory. He leaned toward the woman.

"Luckett, madam? You said your father's name is Luckett? Not Henry M.—by any chance?"

"Yes!" she exclaimed. "Yes, that's my father!"

"Why, he used to preach in Springfield, Illinois, didn't he?" queried Lincoln.

"Yes, Mr. President"—the daughter's voice caught—"he preached there."

"Why, I knew him well!" ejaculated Lincoln. "I've heard him preach often. He's a tall, angular man like I am and I've been mistaken for him on the street. He was a man of enormous faith. He could preach anybody into heaven! And he's to be shot to-morrow! No! No! There'll be no shooting or hanging in this case. Henry M. Luckett! There must indeed be something wrong with his mind or he wouldn't be in such a scrape as this! You may rest assured, my child, that your father's life is safe."

He rang the bell and called for John Hay to whom he dictated a telegram ordering the execution of Henry M. Luckett to be suspended until further word came from the President. "And that further word will never be sent," he added to Luckett's daughter.

The three tried brokenly to thank him but he urged them gently toward the door, repeating to himself, "Henry M. Luckett! No! No! There'll be no shooting or hanging in this case!"

During the next hour as he listened to the infinite variety of needs urged on him by his callers, he was think-

ing of Luckett and of Beecher. Both of them so sure of God and of heaven, yet Luckett so passionately unwilling to test that God and that heaven. Would Beecher behave like this? Or was he doing Luckett an injustice and was the panic all on the daughter's side? Certainly panic was a most natural feeling on her part.

CHAPTER XVII

NEITHER LET IT BE AFRAID

MARY was preparing for bed when her husband finally quit work for the day. As he came slowly into her room, she turned from the mirror before which she was brushing her long hair and shook her head.

"You poor tired thing! I waited for you in the sitting room until I fell asleep over my book. You must be at least a thousand times more weary than I am!"

He dropped into a rocking-chair by her dressing table, clasping his knee with long brown hands. "Mary, do you remember Henry Luckett, the preacher?"

Mary frowned in concentration, the brush following the heavy chestnut strands, slowly. "Um—yes! He was a good deal of a ranter, as I recall. Abr'am, I'm getting gray!"

"Well, he's been in a devil of a scrape. His daughter came to me to-night with a pitiful story." He repeated the tale.

"You let him off, of course," said Mary, beginning to braid the shining locks.

"Yes, I did. But, Mary, these preachers puzzle me. You'd think an old fellow like Luckett would be glad to go to the heaven he's so sure about."

"I don't see why a preacher's life shouldn't be as precious to him as yours is to you or mine is to me. After all, they're human. That's a queer comment for you to make, my dear. . . . Abr'am, just look at the gray

around my temples! . . . I'm getting old." Her eyes widened with sudden terror. "Old! Mary Todd!"

Something frantic in her voice roused her husband from his preoccupation with Luckett's and Beecher's states of mind. He looked at her attentively; not in search of gray hairs but to verify the note of terror in her voice. Her distended pupils told him what he wished to know.

"But," he said, earnestly, "you don't expect me to observe that, do you? It's impossible for me to see change in you. I'm too close to you."

But Mary was pursuing her own line of thought. "To lose my lovely skin and my teeth and my hair! It's horrible! Old age is living death."

"After all," groped Lincoln, "the thing that's growing old is just the house *you* live in, your little cabin. It's bound to lose a few shingles from the roof as time goes on and the logs will have to be re-chinked more frequently. But everybody admits that the longer you live in your home the more hallowed it becomes."

"What woman wants to be hallowed?" wailed Mary. "I want to be lovely." She stared unseeingly at him.

Lincoln sighed. "I reckon I could understand you better if I hadn't been so ungodly ugly all my life."

But for once she did not protest at his disparagement of himself. "Old age! I'm forty-six. It's coming! It'll be here in another ten years and there is nothing to be done about it. It's as inevitable as the Rebellion was. Your simile fails. Any attempt to patch the roof or chink the walls is futile. 'Summer's honeydew cannot hold out against the wreckful siege of battering years.' Shakespeare faced it."

"And around the dear ruins," quoted Lincoln softly, "each wish of my heart, shall entwine itself verdantly still."

Mary did not respond. "One thing is sure! I'll not be one of those dreadful old women who make abortive efforts to look young. What I can do cleverly, I will—" defiantly—"but"—with a sudden focusing of her gaze on his—"what I must and shall do will be to evolve a philosophy that will reconcile me." She gave a little dry sob.

Her husband put out his long arm and catching the flowing sleeve of her eider-down dressing sacque, drew her gently to his knees. "My darling girl, doesn't it do you any good to know that if you were a hundred years old, you'd still be beautiful little Mary Todd to me?"

"Yes, it helps," she said, soberly kissing him, "but, oh, my dear, you can't imagine what an essential pillar of her being a woman's vanity is! I simply can't picture myself as existing without it. I doubt if I have strength in myself to grow a philosophy to take its place. You don't know what it is to find yourself so totally swamped and inadequate."

"Don't I?" demanded Lincoln, grimly. "I'm struggling in my own innards right now with a worse problem. And it's torture."

His words shattered at one blow all of Mary's unwonted concentration on herself. "I'm a shallow-brained fool! What's the trouble, my dear? Tell me."

"That's just what I mustn't do," declared her husband. "It's not fair to you to load you with a problem you'd take too seriously, and it's merely a question in metaphysics."

"How could such a question be torture?" asked Mary.

"That's where my weakness comes in, you see."

"Tell me," urged his wife, a small hand coaxingly on his shoulder. "I won't take it too seriously."

He shook his head. "No, you can't be impersonal about it and you'll be upset. Anyhow, I can't get it into

words. I tried to express it to Beecher, yesterday, and got nowhere."

"If you can talk to him you can talk to me," declared Mary jealously. "Sharing helps. I've been eased by sharing with you to-night."

He was sorry that he had brought himself into the conversation. He had no business to pull Mary into the shadow. And yet, as he felt that faithful small hand on his shoulder, the desire to confess to her overcame every scruple and he began deliberately to try to phrase the unphrasable.

"I suppose I'm being troubled as you are by the approach of old age. I hope that's all there is to it. I'm ten years farther along the trail than you are, dear wife, and the question that's facing me is, what follows old age —at least, that's part of the question."

He felt Mary's fingers tighten. "You mean what follows death! You fear assassination!"

"No, I don't *fear* it," he insisted. Then sighing, he added, "I told you I couldn't mention it without your getting upset!"

"I'm as calm as the church's firm foundation," declared Mary. "You can tell me anything and I won't even *think* hysterically. What did Beecher say when you asked him that, as I suppose you did?"

"Well, you see, Beecher is so sure of heaven, himself, that he simply can't picture the mind of any one who isn't as sure as he is."

Mary returned his gaze steadily. "You never told me you had doubts. I know you have little use for creeds but I thought your deep faith in an all-loving God was unshakable!"

"So it is. But knowing there is God doesn't inevitably include knowing there's immortality. And"—finding an inexpressible relief in opening his heart—"I'm not sure

that it's doubt of immortality that constitutes the shadow. Perhaps it's my inability to interpret what may be meant as a warning or even a command. . . . Or maybe it's merely my inability to reconcile myself to going even twenty years from now. You see I, too, need a philosophy."

"You need religion," said Mary promptly. "You need Jesus Christ."

"What could He do for me?" asked Lincoln, gently. "Supposing—mind, I only say supposing—one doesn't believe He was God on earth, what of Christ, then?"

"Even supposing that," she replied sturdily, "He had a sureness about the hereafter which no man ever had in the same way. And His conviction that He knew is comforting to any one even though He seems not God. *Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Sufficient unto the day are the evils thereof.*"

He looked beyond Mary into the fire. Matchless words spoken indeed from a matchless confidence. *Let not your heart be troubled.* To any one who believed Christ was God that admonition must be as soothing as a mother's hand in the dark of a nightmare. So much for faith. . . . But what of the interpretation of the shadow? It was premonition of what? But this he would not ask Mary now.

"You have an inestimable advantage over me," he remarked after a moment, "in your orthodoxy. A mind like mine is a curse to its owner. Mary, my job here isn't done yet. Who'll bind the nation's wounds? Who is left in the North who feels to the South as I do? I feel—" He hesitated, groping again for words.

Mary supplied them. *"Like as a father pitieth his children."*

"Yes! Yes! Mary, I think Grant feels that way, too, but he doesn't know how to manage the politicians.

He's shown that throughout the war. Who'll save poor old Davis and his fellow-failures? Mary, the whole Cabinet has pulled on the black cap! And who'll clinch the victory for the negro by using moderation in the interpretation of the Thirteenth Amendment? Andy Johnson's as bitter toward the southern leaders as a green persimmon. Seward—Seward's—"

"Seward's a mere opportunist." Mary was pale but her voice was firm. "And Stanton will always belong to the man who can boss him as a bully always does."

Lincoln went on: "Charles Sumner might scorn to qualify as a public executioner but there's no doubt he's willing to crush the southern white for the sake of the darkies. Mary, I don't think I'm egotistical when I say I think I still have a job and one demanding peculiar qualities in the possessor."

Mary slipped from her perch on his knees to walk uneasily about the room. When she returned to stand before him she was deadly white and her voice was a little husky as she said:

"I think you're the most far-visioned and most able statesman in America to-day, my dear. But even at that if God really wants democracy to live, if He really is in favor of the Union as we think the outcome of the war has proved, He isn't depending on one man to preserve it. God ultimately will save the Union, whatever happens to you!" She looked at him with unutterable anguish in her blue eyes. "Whatever happens to you!" she repeated, and suddenly clasping her hands before her eyes she burst into tears.

Lincoln put out his long arm and drew her to his heart. She stopped weeping, immediately, and they sat cheek to cheek, watching the leaping fire.

After a moment she murmured brokenly, *"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*

He drew her closer still. "You comfort me," he said.

CHAPTER XVIII

APRIL TWELFTH

IMMEDIATELY after breakfast, the next morning, Lincoln went over to the War Office for direct news from the front. The rain of the previous night had passed, leaving only a light mist through which the sun shone warmly. Between the brick path and the wall, tulips and hyacinths were in full bloom but the crocuses which had dotted the lawn had all been crushed by the crowds of the past few days. The oaks and walnuts in Adams' Grove were bursting with rose-tinted buds and the lilac bushes near the turnstile were reeling sweet.

The President walked slowly but lightly, his head up, drawing deep breaths of spring into his winter-ravished body. He could feel the sap rise in his soul.

The telegraph room adjoining Stanton's office was in full swing. Lincoln paused for a few moments to greet his friends.

"Well, boys, what's the news from General Sherman?"

"None yet, sir," replied Major Eckert. "But General Grant will reach Washington to-morrow."

"There is a new letter from Petroleum Nasby just out, Mr. Lincoln," called David Bates. "He has a good deal to say about your visit to Richmond!"

"No! Has he!" The President grinned broadly. "I haven't been to my office yet so haven't seen my copy. Is it good and saucy? That's the way I like 'em."

He sat down on the edge of Bates' desk and took the clipping from the boy's hand.

Saints' Rest, wich is in the Stait
uv Nou Gersey
April 10, 1865.

I survived the defeet uv Micklellan (who wuz truly the nashen's hope and pride, likewiz) becoz I felt assoored that the rane of the goriller Linkin wood be a short wun. That in a few months at furthest General Lee wood capsher Washington, depose the ape and set up there a constooshnal guverment based upon the grate and immutable trooth that a white man is better than a nigger.

I survived the loss of Atlanter and Savanner and Charleston becoz dependin on Suthern papers, I bleeved that them places wuz given up,—mind, given up becuz the Confedrets desired to Consentrate for a crushin blow.

I survived the fall of Richmond tho it wuz a staggerer becuz I still hed faith that grate and good man Lee did it for strategy that he mite consentrate hisself sumwhers else and when the Ablishenists geered me and sez "Richmond" and "Go up bald head" to me, I shoke my fist at 'em and sed Wat and you'll see. I wuz alooken for the blow thet wuz to foller the consentrashun.

It cum. . . .

Stanton, hearing the President's voice, appeared in the door of his office and his harsh tones broke in on Lincoln's delighted drawl.

"Good morning, Mr. Lincoln! I have a very troublesome problem here for which you're responsible."

The President looked over his spectacles. "Hello, Mr. Stanton! You must listen to this!"

"I'm sorry, but it's impossible at the moment." The color rose in Stanton's tired face.

"You don't appreciate Nasby's genius, I'm afraid," sighed Lincoln, comically. He rose and after placing the letter in his pocketbook, he followed the Secretary into the inner office. There he leaned against the high desk and waited.

Stanton picked up a telegram and said abruptly, "I

have censured General Weitzel for not seeing to it that prayers for the President of the United States were included in the church services in Richmond on Sunday. He replies that the tone of his conversations with you in Richmond justifies the omission. Will you tell me just what you said on the subject to Weitzel?"

Lincoln with difficulty held back a contemptuous grunt. Surely this was too trivial even for Stanton. But evidently not, for the Secretary went on, "Weitzel permitted the churches to open on the general condition that no disloyal sentiments be uttered. But the clergy in the Episcopal churches who had formerly offered prayers for that traitorous Davis prayed only for those in authority and omitted the President of the United States. It is a studied affront to you and your office. What order had you given Weitzel?"

Lincoln felt more annoyance than he cared to show. Nothing could be more distasteful to him than the empty forms appertaining to his office. He knew how Stanton delighted in dignities of place and ordinarily he was willing to take that fact lightly. But the fussiness of Stanton in this instance was deliberately ungenerous and as absurd as it was unnecessary.

"I don't remember hearing prayers spoken of while I was in Richmond," he said, impatiently, "but I've no doubt General Weitzel acted in what appeared to him to be the spirit and temper manifested by me while there."

"I can imagine what that spirit and temper were," sneered Stanton.

"Now I will let him have it!" thought Lincoln. He went on, aloud, "What I ordered Weitzel with regard to the Richmond people was to let them down easy and I say the same to you, Mr. Stanton. Leave the preachers to stew in their own juice. The welfare of the office I hold is in no degree dependent on the petitions in the

Rebel prayer-books. This sort of bullying is particularly unpleasant to me."

"Bullying!" Stanton's voice was outraged.

"Well, you've got the fellow down, haven't you? "Good God, would you ask him to pray for you while he's spitting out the broken teeth? They wouldn't stand for that even in a little boys' fight. The important thing at the moment in Richmond is to find out what their so-called Legislature is doing. I reckon I'll get a telegram off about that at once."

He returned to the outer office and seating himself at Eckert's desk, wrote a message to Weitzel, ". . . Is there any sign of the Rebel Legislature coming together on the understanding in my letter to you? If there is any such sign, inform me what it is. If there is no such sign, you may withdraw the offer."

He handed the message to an operator. "Send the reply over to me as soon as it arrives." Then he stood in thought for a moment. Poor old overworked Stanton! Slowly drawing Petroleum Nasby's letter from his pocket, he went back to the Secretary's desk.

"Just listen, Mr. Stanton! This scratches the itch you can't reach." And quite unrebuffed by Stanton's look of fury he went on with the effusion:

"Lee surrendered. Good hevins! Is this the dyin' in the last ditch? Is this the fightin' till the last man was an inanimat copse? Is this the bringin' up the childern to take ther places, as the old ones peg out under Yankee bullits? Lee surrendered! Why this ends the bizniz. The South is conkered. *Conkered! Conkered!* CONKERED. Linkin rides into Richmond. A Illinois X rail-splitter, a buffoon, a ape, a goriller, a smutty joker, sets himself down in President Davis's cheer and rites despatches. Where are the matrons uv Virginia? Did they not bare ther buzums and rush on 2 the Yankee baynets that guarded the monster? Did they not cut ther children's throtes and wavin' a Con-

fedrit flag in one hand plunge a meat knife in 2 ther throbbin' buzum with the tother rather than see ther city dishonored by the tred uv a conkerers foot?

"Alars! not wunst. Pir contrary, I reed in the papers that they did rush wildly through the streets with their children in ther arms. But it wuz at the Yankee commissary train who gave 'em bred and meat which they eat vociferously . . . this ends the chapter. The Confederacy is ded. Its gathered up its feet, sed its last words and deceest."

Lincoln paused to shout with laughter. Stanton eyed him, helplessly, and then gave a delighted titter which grew in a moment to a nerve-relaxing guffaw.

"I'll leave this with you as I have a copy at home," said Lincoln. He laid the clipping on the desk, nodded and walked thoughtfully out.

As he moved along the garden wall he pondered on Stanton's lack of a sense of proportion. The Secretary would kick up as much of a fuss, bring up as heavy guns over as trivial a matter as that of prayers in Richmond as he would over the shifting of the supreme command of the army. He undoubtedly would make more trouble in Richmond over a sentence in one or two church services than Weitzel would make in imposing Federal control on the whole city.

He paused for a moment facing Adams' Grove, only half conscious of the rising summer in the tiny world of trees and shrubs while he struggled to throw off the persisting feeling of irritation toward the Secretary of War.

"I'm not fair to the old fellow," he told himself. "Time and again he's saved the country by this arbitrary meddling and overzealousness of his." He reviewed in his mind innumerable crises in which Stanton's dauntless self-assurance and czarism had pulled the army out of apparently insuperable difficulties. One had only to balance his great qualities as a war minister against his

petty qualities as a friend to see how fully the good outweighed the bad. Mary and Hill Lamon protested often against his patience with Stanton's tyrannies. Well, they hadn't protested that week in September in 1863 when Stanton bullied the President and the Cabinet into backing him while he played the brutal czar and saved Kentucky and Tennessee from the Rebels.

He laughed as he recalled that September episode. Stanton whooped an orderly out to the Soldiers' Home one night and routed the President out of bed, with a mysterious request to come instantly to the War Office. Startled, Lincoln pulled his trousers and coat over his night-shirt and galloped hatless into the city.

In Stanton's office he found the entire Cabinet assembled with General-in-Chief Halleck, all more or less in undress and all waiting much alarmed for the President's arrival. Stanton had refused to make explanations until he came. But when Lincoln was perched on the high desk stool he announced that the Army of the Cumberland under General Rosecrans was starving, man and beast, and that its morale was so broken that a sneeze from the Rebels would destroy it. Even without the sneeze, ten days would see the Army wiped out by hunger and consequent disease and desertions.

"That will give the enemy the gateway to the West, through the Alleghanies. Reënforcements and supplies must be sent within a week. How are we to do it? I've called you all together to have the resources of the country pooled."

"No matter if we do pool everything, Mr. Stanton," the Secretary of the Treasury protested, "it'll take two months to get adequate reënforcements up there."

Stanton yelped, "I'll have 20,000 men there in five days if I'm given power! I'll rob the Army of the Potomac."

"You couldn't get 'em to Washington from Manassas in five days!" Lincoln exclaimed. "What chance have you to send 'em the 1,200 miles to Chattanooga?"

"It would take a minimum of three months!" General Halleck declared flatly.

"Three hells!" roared Stanton. "You can all get out of here and go back to bed, except you, Mr. Lincoln. I want you here for authority."

"But, Mr. Stanton"—Lincoln shook his head—"you'll paralyze the country for months."

"Do you mean you'll not back me?" exclaimed the Secretary of War. "Dare you risk the catastrophe? You can't realize—you won't realize—you—" Stanton paused. Articulation failed him. He shook as with a chill. Tears ran down his cheeks.

Lincoln slid from his stool. "Do what you think best, Stanton. What do I sign first?"

The Secretary of War sniffed violently at his cologne bottle. "The rest of you go back to bed," he gulped.

Meekly the others filed out—even Halleck! Then with the President quietly obeying orders, Stanton got to work. For four hours they dictated messages. Within twenty minutes after the first wire, replies began to come in. At 3.30 that morning they were able to telegraph to Rosecrans, "Have arranged to send 16,000 infantry under Hooker. Will have them in Nashville in five to six days."

By seven o'clock that morning, the heads of three railroads which Lincoln had commandeered had arrived in Stanton's office. By eight o'clock, all traffic had been cleared along the route and the first troops entrained at Bealton, Virginia. Every half hour thereafter more troops departed. Stanton commissioned all train despatchers and station masters along the route as captains, with orders to arrest any soldiers leaving the trains. He

ordered 8,000 negroes set at work changing the gauge of one of the railroads. He ordered an acquaintance in Cleveland, in the President's name, to go at once to Cincinnati and take possession of all railroads south of the Ohio and to call on any manufacturer for more rolling stock.

At noon of September 24th, Lincoln left Stanton and went to take care of his own work. He returned at intervals during the next thirty-six hours, to find that Stanton had not slept nor left his office. But on the evening of the 25th, about nine o'clock, when the President put his head into the Secretary's room, he discovered him stretched on the old horse-hair sofa, a cologne-saturated handkerchief over his face. Lincoln carefully withdrew and Major Eckert showed him the dispatch that had sent Stanton to sleep. It was from General Hooker, stating that the last man of a reënforcement of 23,000 had entrained that afternoon and that a caravan six miles in length was racing over the Alleghanies.

Within ten days the entire force had reached Chattanooga and the gateway to the West was saved.

As this memory with all its details passed rapidly before his mind's eye, Lincoln's irritation with Stanton gave way to a not unamused gratitude. It was with good humor fully restored that he observed Tad walking slowly across the lawn, with the yellow kitten on his shoulder.

"Tad!" he called.

The boy sauntered toward his father. "Papa day, give me a dollar?"

"That's a good deal of cash this early in the morning?" said Lincoln as his hand slipped automatically into his trousers' pocket. "What's up?"

"I want to buy fireworks. A bunch of us kids is going to whoop it up on old Jeff Davis. Come on with me,

papa day, while I buy 'em." He slipped a beguiling small hand into his father's.

"Well, if it won't take too long," agreed Lincoln. "Put the kitten inside the hall and tell the doorman I'll be back shortly."

He forgot that there was such a thing as the necessity for safeguarding himself. A great flush of well-being for a moment crowded every anxiety—his own and other people's—from his mind. With the little calloused palm in his, he strolled through the vegetable garden, lifted Tad over the south fence and for a little while watched the Union Light Guard drilling on the rough ground known as the Treasury Park. Then the two walked slowly east to Pennsylvania Avenue, chatting amiably. But as they reached the door of the Kirkwood House at Twelfth Street, Lincoln's conscience returned to duty and startled him from his preoccupation with Tad's plans for a celebration. Andrew Johnson lived at this hotel.

"I'm going in and call on the Vice-President, son," he said suddenly.

"But you promised to shop with me," protested Tad. "I don't want to talk to old Johnson."

"What grudge have *you* got against him?" asked Lincoln, looking down on the forage cap which adorned his son's head.

"Him? Oh, he's all right. He's a good old fellow. He bought a dolla's wo'th of lemonade from me the othe' day at my hospital stand on the lawn and he made old Treasurer M'Culloch shell out too. But I'm sick of politics, I can tell you. I'm going to be a farmer when I get to be a man, no matta' how much they tease me to be President."

"What makes you think they'll tease you to take that very unwelcome office?" asked his father. "Anyhow, I

reckon they won't want a President who can't pronounce his R's."

"I can too pronounce 'em and you know it, when I put my mind on it!" cried Tad, indignantly. "I've been pronouncing 'em at least half the time lately. And I know they'll want me to be President because I'm your son."

Lincoln, with one foot on the steps of the Kirkwood House, laughed delightedly. "You go ahead and get your snap-crackers, boy, and when you've finished call for me here. Now, don't make a fuss. Here's some hush money!" He pressed a quarter into Tad's palm. Father and son grinned at each other and Lincoln went on into the hotel.

As he approached the desk in the lobby, he observed that the clerk was speaking to a short, heavy-set man in slipshod clothes, with his flaxen hair hanging over his collar. The man slunk away as the clerk turned hastily to the President.

"Get on with your friend," said Lincoln. "I only want to see Mr. Johnson."

"Friend!" ejaculated the clerk. "He's not even an acquaintance. He's hostler, hanger-on or what-not to John Wilkes Booth. He has been skulking around here ever since breakfast and I was trying to find out what he was up to before throwing him out."

He was leading the way up the staircase as he spoke. George Atzerodt had no intention of revealing the purpose of his visit to the clerk. Booth had impressed thoroughly on his henchman's slow mind that he was to get Vice-President Johnson pointed out to him by some one not connected with the hotel. He was to locate Johnson's room, also. Now, in the absence of the clerk he asked several persons if they knew the Vice-President by sight, but by the time the clerk returned he had had no success and he concluded that a short absence would have a salutary effect. He slipped out to the stables.

CHAPTER XIX

FOR OFFENSES MUST COME

LINCOLN found both Vice-President and Mrs. Johnson at home. He had not met Johnson's wife before. She was lying in an arm-chair before a brisk fire, a bowl of half-blown lilacs on the little marble-topped table at her elbow and a copy of *Harper's Weekly* in her lap. She wore a black merino frock with a flat collar of white lawn caught at the throat by a cameo brooch. A pink knit shawl reflected a little color in her white cheeks. Eliza Johnson was a semi-invalid, for she was fighting against consumption. It had developed under the hardships of the war. Yet, in spite of her delicacy, she was beautiful, Lincoln thought, as he bowed over her hand.

Her eyes, a soft hazel, were extraordinarily large, her nose was pure Grecian, her mouth generous and beautifully curved. Her whole physiognomy was that of a big nature and a keen intelligence.

Johnson had been writing at a table. Now, at a glance from Eliza, he hastily pulled on his coat. The two men then seated themselves before the fire.

"This is homelike," said Lincoln. "I hope the opening weather finds you feeling a little more spry, madam."

"I'm doing well, Mr. Lincoln," replied Mrs. Johnson in the soft drawl of Tennessee. "Mrs. Lincoln, they tell me, is standing up under the strain."

"She's as lively as a humming bird and as cheering. Tad and I would go under if it wasn't for Mother's laughter, I can tell you. She's threatening to come to see

you but I don't know when she'll make it. She doesn't exactly have to set the bread to rise but she does have me and the Executive Mansion heavy on those little hands of hers."

"I know," nodded Mrs. Johnson. "Tell her there's no hurry though I'd be delighted and honored to see her."

"You're looking tired, Mr. Lincoln," Johnson's quiet voice broke in. "When do you propose to take a rest?"

"Just as soon as you and the Cabinet are re-tempered —mollified to a softer consistency, as it were. I'm no great shakes as a blacksmith but I'm going to have a try." He laughed softly.

Johnson's black eyes twinkled. He turned to his wife. "My dear, I warned you that Mr. Lincoln was going to try to make me over. You're the one he must consult. Maybe you won't want your magnificent creation tampered with."

Lincoln looked from one to the other. Every one knew that when Eliza McArdle, the young schoolteacher, had married Andrew Johnson, the young tailor, he had been an illiterate, untrained cub and that for all his great natural cleverness as a politician, he owed all that he was to her early teaching and her continued polishing of his rough metal. The Lincolns and the Johnsons had much in common.

"I have only one criticism to make of your work, madam," said Lincoln, at last. "Your husband doesn't realize what a good job you made of him. If he could do that, he wouldn't be so sore at what he calls the aristocrats and half his hatred of the Secessionists would disappear."

"You mean," exclaimed Eliza, "that if he could only recognize the fact that he's the peer of the best of 'em, his bitterness would drop from him! That's true."

"Even my wife or your wife couldn't and can't change

the fact that you and I are both plebeians." Johnson spoke quietly but his black eyes glowed.

"That word simply hasn't any meaning in America any more than the word aristocrat has," returned the President. "Personally I don't care what I'm called. God knows I've had my choice of hard titles as you have, Mr. Johnson. You've done more for the Union cause than any one I know, and yet your attitude denies the very bedrock of the Union, that all men are created equal. You say you're a plebeian. You rave against aristocrats. You waste your strength hating weak sisters like Jeff Davis and Judah Benjamin. Hate will hamstring you, Johnson. Vengeance is unworthy of a man of your intellectual caliber."

Johnson folded his arms, compressed his thin lips and said nothing.

A red spot appeared in one of Mrs. Johnson's thin cheeks. "Perhaps you don't understand all my husband's been through, sir," she exclaimed. "He's had—"

The President interrupted her. "He's had the toughest job of the War. Of the public men of the South, he's stood alone against the passions of Secession. He's held old Tennessee to her moorings while she weltered in successive tornadoes; Shiloh, Ft. Donelson, Chattanooga, Lookout Mountain—I needn't count 'em over to you, the battles he's helped her weather. Whenever anybody criticizes your husband to me I tell him no one has a right to judge Andrew Johnson who hasn't suffered as much and done as much as he has for the nation's sake. Yes, ma'am, all that and a hundred facts more I know and appreciate. And yet, I'm going to ask Andrew Johnson to make a still greater sacrifice for the Union. I want him to give up all thought of vengeance, even of punishment for the southern leaders, and turn his great abilities to healing the nation's wounds."

Eliza spoke as if her husband were not present. "You can't change Andrew Johnson's nature, Mr. Lincoln, and after all, it's his nature that's made it possible for him to endure and accomplish what he has. You rule by diplomacy. That's your nature. Andrew rules by force. That's his nature. I remember when Nashville was besieged and the city leaders begged him to give up and surrender, he drew his pistol and said, 'I'm no military man but I know we can hold out and any man who talks of surrender, I'll shoot.' Well, the Union troops rallied and the city was saved. That wouldn't have been your way but it was Andy's."

The Vice-President moved uneasily and interrupted, with a curious expression in his deep eyes. "You think it's the names they've called me that makes me hate the aristocrats. Well, it's not. Do you know what I think of every day of my life and what I'll get even with Jeff Davis for if it takes ten years?" He spoke with impressive dispassionateness. "They threw my sick wife and my dying son into the street and they turned the house I built with my own hands into a barracks."

Lincoln thought of Mary ill and of Willie, dying—Willie in the streets, dying. Sudden tears dripped to his cheeks. He leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes for a moment while he collected himself. The two watching him wore a look of pity not unmixed with awe. The President's expression had the extraordinary sweetness and resignation of a death mask.

"Just what do you want my husband to do, Mr. Lincoln?" asked Eliza Johnson, softly.

Lincoln opened his eyes and said slowly, "I am haunted by a presentiment that I shall not live after the coming of peace. I want to commit my charge into hands that are kindly."

Great lumps appeared on Johnson's lean jaws as his

teeth clinched on Lincoln's words. Beads of sweat showed on his upper lip. He leaned toward the President and ejaculated through set teeth, "Assassination! And you expect my blood to remain uncurdled if those dogs assassinate you? *You!* No, Mr. Lincoln, you ask the impossible! By God, I'd hunt them down if it took the entire army! I'd wipe out every damned aristocrat in the Confederacy and hang them if I had to do it with my own hands!"

"Hush, Andrew!" Mrs. Johnson laid a thin hand on her husband's knee. Automatically, his own closed upon it. "Mr. Lincoln," she went on, "you mustn't misunderstand Mr. Johnson. If it's your ideas of reconstruction you're thinking about, don't be concerned. My husband believes in your program."

"But it's a program of conciliation," insisted Lincoln.

She nodded. "I know. It's a healing of the nation as Christ would have healed it. And, as I fear only Christ could do it. But one can try. Can't one, Andrew?" turning to her husband.

But Johnson sat staring at Lincoln with anguished eyes and did not reply. And after a moment, perceiving that he had given the Vice-President more than he could bear, Lincoln made his adieux and went out.

He did not wait for Tad, but leaving word with the clerk for the child, strode out of the hotel.

The misty sun felt good.

George Atzerodt, now in the bar-room, saw him go and made of the fact an excuse for saying to an officer standing at the door, "That was old Abe, eh? Looks like an easy fellow to know."

Colonel Nevins looked at Atzerodt with amusement in his eyes. "He is easy to know. Why didn't you speak to him?"

"I would have," grinned Atzerodt, "if I'd been in my

Sunday clothes. I'm wearing these because I'm trying to see Andy Johnson and he prefers poor folks. A tramp can always get a good word from him. No, I ain't a tramp, if that's what you're grinning at. All you folks'll laugh out of the other side of your mouths yet. I'll admit I'm about broke now but I got friends enough to give me as much as will see me through. I'm going away some of these days but I'll come back with as much gold as will keep me all my days."

"Let me in on the bonaza," smiled Nevins.

Atzerodt returned the smile. "I might, later."

The colonel, who faced the door into the lobby, said suddenly, "There goes Mr. Johnson into the dining room now."

Atzerodt turned eagerly but too late. "Gosh," he muttered, "I gotta see him! Do you know which is his room?"

"Yes, it's near mine. What's the idea, friend?" curiously.

"Well, Andy borrowed money from my old German father, once, and I'm going to get it back."

The officer shouted with laughter. "So that's your gold mine! Well, go after him hard! He's a mean cuss, I've heard. Come, I'll show you his room, for they won't let you into the dining room!"

He crossed the lobby and Atzerodt followed him up the stairs, where Nevins pointed out a closed door to him. Atzerodt muttered the number to himself and then with a word of thanks turned back to the stairs. The colonel went into his own room but later as he left the hotel he saw Atzerodt still lingering before the entrance.

"Well, did you collect?" demanded the colonel.

Atzerodt shook his head. "Haven't even seen him yet."

"He's alone in the dining room now. You can't miss him," chuckled Nevins. "Good luck to you!"

"Thanks!" ejaculated Atzerodt. He once more entered the hotel and peered in at the door of the dining room. Johnson, eating his solitary meal, was quite unconscious of the man's sullen scrutiny. The head-waiter, accustomed to the interest shown by every one in this distinguished guest, allowed Atzerodt a long moment of gaping before he closed the door in his face.

The conspirator was, as he had said, without funds and so had drunk very little that morning. As he walked along Pennsylvania Avenue he pondered, uneasily, on the two famous men he had seen at the Kirkwood. Johnson's face had made no impression on his feelings but as he reconsidered Lincoln's a sensation of uneasiness and vague regret touched him.

"Booth's a blasted fool," he muttered. "There's nothing to hate about that man. He's never hurt a fly, betcha. For two cents I'd cut back to Fort Tobacco and go on with my own job." He bit off a chew from the remnant of a black plug. After all, why did he stick to the actor? Booth was all promise and no performance, as Arnold had said. Here he had been for hours hanging round the Kirkwood House, breakfastless and drinkless, spying on a man he'd been told off to stab although he'd never seen the man and had no possible grudge against him. After all, he didn't *know* that the Confederate government was in on this and would make them all rich. He had only Booth's word for that. It was possible that Booth was lying to them and was merely using them all to make himself famous. What other excuse could Booth have for waiting for Lincoln's going to the theater? Why, any one could shoot Lincoln any time and anywhere! The Richmond government if they wanted to

make way with old Abe wouldn't stand for any such nonsense as the theater scheme.

But Mrs. Surratt was a hard-headed dame and she believed in Booth or she wouldn't have him round the house the way she did and let John Surratt do the actor's errands. When John came back from Richmond he always brought gold, so the Secesh government did give money for secret jobs. The stable-keeper had told him Surratt had shown him three $100 notes in his pocketbook. Booth always had big bills with him too. Mike O'Laughlin claimed Booth had borrowed $500 from him last fall but that was probably a lie. Or else O'Laughlin's whining that he was hard-up was a lie.

Ruminating slowly, his thought now turned to Andrew Johnson. The man had broad muscular shoulders and a chest like a blacksmith. "He don't know the meaning of fear," Atzerodt told himself. "They say that out in Tennessee they tried everything but shooting on him and he fought 'em all to a standstill. If he didn't put the fear of God into 'em, I heard a fellow say, he put the fear o' Johnson. You'd need a cannon to kill that Carolina cracker."

He halted, staring unseeing at a plane tree's yellow-patched trunk. This plan of trying to stab Andrew Johnson in the dark—Christ—! Had Dave Herold ever seen him? By God, he'd go tell Herold a thing or two about this job Booth had made them partners in!

He knew about where to find Herold. The boy had made a half-hearted attempt to become a druggist and it was probable he would be hanging around the drugstore at Fifteenth Street and the Avenue. The guess proved correct. A slender, insignificant youth in a short fawn overcoat which had once belonged to Booth and with a little round-rimmed white felt hat pulled low

over his gray eyes, lounged idly before the red-and-green-glass druggist's symbol.

Atzerodt shambled up to him. "If you ain't got nothing better'n this to do, come round and help me exercise the horses."

David pulled irresolutely at a small mustache which did not conceal a rather shapeless mouth above his receding chin. "I wasn't going—I was just waiting—"

"Come on, Dave, I want to talk to you. I've just seen some one you're interested in. Come on," jerking his head peremptorily.

"Well, just for a little while." Dave fell into step with Atzerodt. "You see, George"—in a low voice—"Grant's expected in town and Booth told me to locate him."

"You thought you'd meet him in the drug store buying sulphur and molasses for the spring clean-out, I suppose," grunted George, with heavy sarcasm. "Who's going to tackle Grant, that fighting pup? Not me! I'd rather try to stop Pickett's charge with a broom-straw." He laughed heartily at his own wit. "Haven't got a bottle with you, old man?"

David nodded and when they reached the privacy of the alley behind Ford's Theater, he pulled a whiskey flask from his breast pocket and handed it to his companion.

Edward Spangler was sitting on an overturned water-pail, his back against the stable wall, a corn-cob pipe hanging from his mouth, eyes closed. He was snoring loudly.

"Pretty, isn't he!" giggled Dave.

The two gazed with amusement at the middle-aged face. It was blotched and swollen and discolored with drink and decorated by a stubble which had been growing since his Sunday shave.

Herold uncorked his whiskey flask and held it under Spangler's bulbous nose. The nostrils quivered, the lips worked and with a particularly heavy snort, Booth's confederate awoke. Herold hastily corked the bottle and made great show of putting it back in his pocket.

"Hey!" protested Spangler, "that's no place for good whiskey. Or ain't it good? Hand it over for an expert to test, Dave!"

Again the bottle made a round. David after his own pull examined it gravely and said, "Not enough to be worth saving!" And with a laugh they finished the pint.

Herold and Atzerodt now established themselves on a box close to Spangler and George began to speak with authority on the dangers of his and David's share in the conspiracy. The whiskey had warmed him by the time he had completed his description of Johnson but it had not stiffened his courage. "I say I don't like the job. I don't like any of it," he declared.

"What don't you like, old fellow?" asked a pleasant voice from the rear door of the theater.

The three started. It was Wilkes Booth. He joined them, deliberately flicking his riding whip at his highly polished riding-boots and with the other hand settling the high stock he affected when on horseback. "Aren't you happy, old Port Tobacco?" he inquired, affectionately. "I thought we'd given you the easy job."

"Say, Mr. Booth, did *you* ever stab Andy Johnson?" grinned Atzerodt. "Now, I never stabbed anything more dangerous than a pig! Did you ever *see* Andy? No! Well, I have, and let me tell you when I think of sneaking into his bedroom in the dark— Say, how about Mrs. Johnson? Do we stab her too or leave her alone to squeal the news?"

Booth replied coldly. "If you'd attended to your work adequately this morning, George, you'd have discovered

that Mrs. Johnson is an invalid and occupies a separate room from her husband. Eddie"—turning to the stage-hand—"the President's been asked to attend Ford's day after to-morrow. If you hear through the box-office of his acceptance before I do, let me know for I want to show you about the President's box."

Spangler took a deliberate bite of plug and handed the cake around, all helping themselves save Booth. "I'm smoking, thanks. Eddie, you're going to help me?"

"Yes, I guess so," replied Spangler, good naturedly.

"You *guess* so!" repeated Wilkes. "That's no answer to a man with my responsibilities."

"I told you I'd help and I will," said Spangler, rising.

"Good! Atzerodt, are you out of it or do you saddle my horse for me, this morning? I'd like to know now among just how many the million dollars is to be divided. If Dave does the job alone, he gets your share, that's certain. Hey, old heart of oak?" slapping young Herold on the shoulder.

"Bet your life!" cried Dave, his weak face setting in firmer lines.

Before Atzerodt's mind's eye danced a memory of three $100 notes and of a dozen gold pieces. There was real money to be had, without doubt. He jumped up with alacrity.

"Don't spend that share till you get it, Dave!" he grinned. "Which horse this morning, Mr. Booth?"

"The one-eyed bay," replied Wilkes, gravely.

CHAPTER XX

"FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES"

LINCOLN found Mr. Welles waiting for him among the other visitors thronging the White House and had him in at once. He wanted to talk again to the Secretary of the Navy on the matter of assembling the Confederate Legislature at Richmond. Welles was still hostile to the idea.

"My thought was," said Lincoln, "to have the men who had done the dirty work come together and undo it."

"They'll use the opportunity to conspire against us," warned the Secretary.

Lincoln shook his head. "They're too exhausted for any more of that. Civil government must be reëstablished at once. There must be courts and law and order in the South or society will be broken up. The disbanded soldiers will turn into guerillas and robber bands. I want Virginians who have been leaders to come together and turn themselves and their neighbors into good Union men. But you're all against me."

"I haven't much faith in negotiating with large bodies of men," remarked Welles. "Each will encourage the other to ask what no one of them would think of asking alone."

Lincoln ran his fingers through his hair. Perhaps it might be as well to give in to the Cabinet on this point. After all he could do almost all that needed to be done through his arrangements with Governor Pierpont. He changed the subject abruptly.

"I've just been having a chat with Andy Johnson and

his wife. She's a fine woman. I went over to their hotel to see if I could get her to shut Andy down on his everlasting talk about destroying what he believes is aristocracy, down South."

"Well, his wife could do it where no man could," agreed the Secretary of the Treasury. "Any pretty woman can influence Andy."

"Oh, come!" protested Lincoln.

"Nothing scandalous, I assure you!" smiled Welles, smoothing his beard. "He's susceptible, but not too susceptible. I've never heard any one even insinuate that he ever let a neat ankle interfere with his fanatical sense of duty to the Union. On the other hand, he never failed to note one en passant, even a Rebel ankle."

"Can't try and convict him of treason for that!" grunted the President.

"His secretary was telling me," Welles went on, "that there was a family out in Nashville, the Hepers, for whom Johnson felt a particular enmity. They had all the characteristics of gentility he despises and they had fought him tooth and nail from the moment he'd been made Military Governor of Tennessee. He finally swore that one more affront and he'd jail the whole family. Not long after this, he was walking along the street in Nashville on which the Hepers lived. As he passed their house Mrs. Heper and her daughter were sitting on the porch. Madam Heper leaned over the rail and spit in Johnson's face and Miss Heper drew her handkerchief through her lips to wet it and flipped it in his eyes—you know the trick. Johnson snatched the handkerchief and without a word tramped on to his office. Then he sent a squad of men and arrested the whole Heper family."

"I'll not say they didn't deserve it!" exclaimed Lincoln.

Welles nodded. "He was purple with rage and rightly. Well, the Hepers as aristocrats had influence and they started using it in every possible way to hound Johnson into freeing them. But they only succeeded in closing his steel-trap jaw the harder. And then, by some hocus-pocus, Miss Heper managed to get herself brought before him. Two weeks in jail had enriched her vocabulary of hate and lady or no lady *bastard Carolinian* was the least of her epithets. Johnson stood behind his desk watching her—she is devilish pretty—and let her talk herself exhausted. When she finished he said gently, 'Madam, here is your handkerchief. I had it washed and ironed for you.'

"She gulped and stared at him. He has a fine, clean, steady eye, you know. And then she began to blush, redder and redder. And then she began to sob, no make-believe, his secretary told me, but shamed sobs like a repentant child. And, be gad, Johnson shook out the handkerchief and walked round his desk and put his arm around her and wiped her tears with it. 'There! There!' he said, 'There! There!' And she put her head down on his shoulder and had a good cry, with Johnson patting her back and looking with a sad little smile first at the girl and then at his secretary. After a moment, she recovered herself and went out with the handkerchief in her hand. That evening, Johnson ordered the Heper family released and he never had a word more trouble with 'em. If it had been Pa Heper who came to his office, Johnson would have knocked the fellow down."

Lincoln was much intrigued by this tale. He chuckled and nodded. "There's great nobility in Andy Johnson. But he's afraid to let people see it. What kind of a President do you think he'd make, Mr. Welles?"

"He might grow to fine heights," replied the Secre-

tary, "if, as you suggest, he didn't stifle his inherent fineness. There's no doubt that he was a great executive in Tennessee. The next four years will tell a good deal. I question very much though whether he could ever be nominated, let alone elected."

"So do I," agreed Lincoln, soberly.

He went over the papers Welles had brought for his signature, affixed his name carefully and went to lunch, turning this new angle of Andrew Johnson's character over in his mind. When the meal was finished, he hurried over to the War Office and found, as he had hoped, that General Weitzel's reply had arrived. "The passports have gone out for the legislature and it is common talk that they will come together."

"Shucks!" exclaimed Lincoln. "It's five days since I talked with Campbell. This delay doesn't show the proper spirit."

"We've received a copy of the call Campbell issued with your permission, Mr. Lincoln," said Stanton, appearing suddenly in the doorway. "If"—with an air of complete triumph—"this doesn't prove everything I've been saying to you, I'm a fool!"

The President took the sheets. They were a telegraphic copy of Weitzel's letter to Campbell and the call to the Confederate legislature. The Southerner had wilfully distorted Lincoln's guarded permit. "The object of the invitation," said Campbell, "is for the government of Virginia to determine whether they will administer the laws in connection with the authorities of the United States. I understand from Mr. Lincoln that if this condition be fulfilled, no attempt would be made to establish or sustain any other authority." The call to the General Assembly contained the same distortion of facts. It announced the consent of "the military authorities of the United States to the session of the legislature in Rich-

mond. The matters to be submitted to the legislature are the restoration of peace to the state of Virginia and the adjustment of questions involving life, liberty and property that have arisen in the States as a consequence of the war."

"Weitzel must have lost his mind," grunted Lincoln. "All right, Mr. Stanton, you win." He sat down at Eckert's desk and wrote slowly with long pauses for thought. It was a full hour before he had completed the message to General Weitzel. "I have just seen Judge Campbell's letter to you of the 7th. He assumes, it appears to me, that I have called the insurgent legislature of Virginia together as the rightful legislature of the State, to settle all differences with the United States. I have done no such thing. I spoke of them not as a legislature but as 'the gentlemen who have acted as the legislature of Virginia in support of the rebellion.' I did this on purpose to exclude the assumption that I was recognizing them as a rightful body. I dealt with them as men having power *de facto* to do a certain thing, to wit: 'to withdraw the Virginia troops and other support from resistance to the General Government' for which in a paper handed to Judge Campbell, I promised a special equivalent, to wit: a remission to the people of the State, except in certain cases, of the confiscation of their property. I meant this and no more. Inasmuch, however, as Judge Campbell misconstrues this and is still pressing for an armistice, contrary to the explicit statement of the paper I gave him, and particularly as General Grant has since captured the Virginia troops so that giving a consideration for their withdrawal is no longer applicable, let my letter to you and to Judge Campbell both be withdrawn or countermanded, and he be notified of it. Do not now allow them to assemble, but if any have come, allow them safe return to their homes."

He took the paper into Stanton's room. "There, sir, does that satisfy you?"

Stanton jerked his head irritably from the mass of papers on his desk and read the telegram. As he read his expression changed. He turned to the President with a delighted smile. "It does the job! Thank God. And clever—! Mr. Lincoln, are you by any chance an opportunist in your policies?"

"Are you?" asked the President, returning the smile.

Stanton said contentedly, "Now we've only to make those rascally clergymen see the light and Richmond will be on the right path. Our friend Number Seven is in Mr. Dana's office, sir."

"Ah!" Lincoln, who had been stiffening himself for another wrestling match with the Secretary, received the abrupt announcement with double pleasure. "Let's have him in."

Stanton rang his bell.

Montgomery looked tired and more nondescript than ever.

"Well, friend, how goes it?" asked the President, shaking hands.

"All well, so far, sir," replied Number Seven. "But I'm glad the war's about over. There's a lot of hotheads up there in Canada. Nobody knows where they'll break out next. They're generous though. They gave me a hundred and fifty dollars for the expenses of this trip. I've credited the cash to my account with this Government!"

"Didn't the hanging of Kennedy and Beall teach them anything?" demanded Stanton.

"Oh, they'll do no more burning of cities or wrecking of trains. But you have no idea of how Sherman's march has infuriated them. Stories of the excesses of his troops

are the chief topics of conversation. And I'll admit, it does seem as if Sherman had been—er—excessive."

"Not at all! Not at all!" declared Stanton. "The South asked for it. Who started this war, eh?"

"This policy of an eye for an eye sometimes overreaches itself," said Montgomery, in no wise perturbed. "Some of the stories are heart-rending and I don't doubt they're true. Anyhow, they make the confederates feel vicious. All of the confederate commissioners, for example, believe that General Sherman ordered the pilfering and burning of Columbia, South Carolina."

"He didn't," said Lincoln. "He ordered the burning of public buildings and manufactories. All libraries, asylums and private dwellings were to be preserved. Columbia was burned by catching fire from the cotton-bales the Rebels had set the torch to before the Union men entered the city."

"What difference does it make who burned that hell-hole?" asked Stanton. "I'm in hearty accord with General Halleck. He wrote Sherman that if he captured Charleston he hoped by some accident the place could be destroyed and a little salt sowed on its site to prevent the growth of future crops of Nullification and Secession. Sherman told me when I visited him in January that his whole army burned with an insatiable desire to wreak vengeance on South Carolina and he almost trembled at her fate, but she deserved all that seemed in store for her. By God, who can be sentimental about that traitorous State? She's the cause of this war!"

"I'm not pitying her, sir," replied Montgomery, steadily. "I'm only warning you that revenge has unexpected reactions, sometimes. The stories of robbery, insult, bullying and destruction that Sherman's bummers have perpetrated—"

"There's been no rape, as a matter of record," interrupted Stanton.

"But cruelties," insisted Number Seven. "Women in bed with child-birth robbed of their bits of jewelry, old people thrown bodily out of their houses, children separated from their parents; those and a thousand other details inflame the minds of the Rebels in Canada."

"Well, that's the inevitable back-wash of war. And who hollered louder for war than South Carolina?" demanded the Secretary of War.

Lincoln began to pace the floor uneasily. "It's all a mistake. Do you remember last fall, Mr. Stanton, I telegraphed Grant at City Point suggesting that he confer with General Lee and stipulate for a mutual discontinuance of house burning and other destruction of private property? And Grant replied that it couldn't be done or words to that effect. Spoke about burning for retaliation being done only by military order. Burning for retaliation!" Tears filled his eyes.

"It has to be, Mr. Lincoln." Stanton spoke very earnestly. "Don't you see that it's inherent in the very nature of war, if we're to sicken the people of war."

"Jacob Thompson told me," Number Seven's level voice continued, "that the Rebels caught a Union lieutenant and seven of his men foraging. They killed them, mutilated them and pinned papers on their breasts, 'Death to foragers.' The next day eighteen more Union privates met the same fate. Sherman then ordered prisoners to be shot man for man and left by the roadside labeled so that every Rebel could see that for every life he executes he takes one of his own."

"And what did Wade Hampton, the Rebel commander, say to that?" cried Stanton. "I'll bet Thompson didn't tell that. Wade's reply was that he'd execute two for one!"

Black horror swept over Lincoln. All that the last few days had brought of surcease to agony of soul disappeared and he was twisted by such an anguished realization of the depths to which his compatriots had sunk that he could not control himself. Great sobs burst from him. "Stop!" he gasped. "Don't tell me more!" He took a deep breath, fighting for control, and took the cutting from Nasby from his pocket. "Did you read this through as I advised you, Mr. Stanton?"

"Oh, for God's sake!" shouted the Secretary. He turned to Montgomery. "Have you something in particular in mind with regard to Jacob Thompson you wanted to tell us?"

"It is only gossip," replied Number Seven. "I repeat it only to show the extremes to which despair and hate have driven these people. Thompson told me that a proposition had been made him to rid the world of the tyrant Lincoln, Stanton, Grant and some others. The men who had made the proposition, he said, were bold, daring men and able to execute anything they would undertake without regard to cost. He said he was in favor of the proposition but had determined to defer his answer until he had consulted with his government at Richmond. He was only awaiting their approval. He thought it would be a blessing North and South to have these men killed."

"Well, we've received the same kind of proposals about Jeff Davis et al.," said Lincoln. "Such stuff means nothing. Davis will ignore them as I have. . . . Did you see General Barnes' funeral parade to-day, Stanton? He was the vainest man I ever met. If he'd known how big a funeral he'd have he'd have died years ago."

He grinned and shook hands with Montgomery and that keen-eyed personage, meeting the President's gaze, suddenly chuckled and then burst into the only laughter

the War Office had ever heard from him. Lincoln went thoughtfully back to his neglected desk.

But the day was destined to be one of curious interludes. As he bent over his letters trying to restore the spiritual balance which he had lost in Stanton's office, John Hay came in to say that the actor James E. Murdock was among the crowd in the reception room. He wanted to thank Lincoln for giving a reprieve to a young relative who had slept on sentinel duty.

"I know how much you enjoyed hearing him recite last year," said John, "and thought we might sandwich him in between Wade and Stevens who are laying for you."

"Murdock! Yes!" exclaimed Lincoln.

A moment later, the handsome, close-shaven actor came in.

"How can I thank you, Mr. President"—he began.

Lincoln interrupted, holding the proffered hand, "How can we pay you for your splendid work for the Union cause, sir? How many thousands of times have you recited for our sick and wounded. The Sanitary Commission ought to raise a monument to you."

"But I've saved no lives, sir," protested Murdock.

"Well"—Lincoln's eyes twinkled—"if you feel that way, you might recite something from Shakespeare for me."

"I haven't been doing much in that line of late," said the actor, "but if you'll indicate something I happen to know—"

"Hamlet's soliloquy!"

Murdock placed his tall hat on the mantel, smoothed his hair, eased his cuffs, folded his arms and began in his matchless voice:

"To be, or not to be: that is the question:"

Lincoln listened with bowed head, drinking in the words which so consummately voiced his needs of soul. When Murdock finished, Lincoln repeated softly:

> "The undiscovered country from whose bourn
> No traveler returns—"

Then, eyeing Murdock speculatively, he asked, "Do you believe in life after death?"

"Yes, Mr. Lincoln. Simply because I can't imagine time or space without myself within them."

"Hah!" The President's gasp was of surprised pleasure. Here was the sort of reply Beecher hadn't been able to give him. "Is that all?" he urged the actor.

"Yes, Mr. Lincoln, but it's enough."

"Enough?" The President smiled. "You are frugal."

"I've spent a lifetime accumulating even that much spiritual wealth," retorted Murdock.

"That's not wealth," protested Lincoln. "Wealth is a superfluity of what we don't need. And that bit of spiritual manna is an essential for your peace, eh?"

"It is indeed, sir." The two eyed each other speculatively and then Murdock said, "I wonder if you'd permit me to say the Lord's prayer?"

"Go ahead, my boy, I'll join you."

President and actor knelt by the Cabinet table and repeated the simple, childlike plea. It carried with it the aroma of nearly two thousand years of authenticity and was unalterably comforting.

Murdock was not in his office ten minutes but when Lincoln turned back to his desk and picked up a report from Seward's office, he felt as if he had been gone an hour. He found himself, as he read a statement of the difficulties France was raising in Mexico, striving to picture the twentieth century without Abraham Lincoln somehow being a spectator. He could not do so.

CHAPTER XXI

APRIL THIRTEENTH

TWILIGHT came early, stealing in with a gentle rain long before the routine moment for lighting the gas. Lincoln, when he could no longer see, dropped his pen and rose not to call for light but to obey an impulse to get out among growing things. In a garden, new planted, one could forget the devastation and the stench of war.

He rang the bell. "Dunn," he said to the guard who answered, "you go find Anna Dickinson. I'm taking her for a walk in the kitchen garden."

He waited patiently while listening to Dunn calling "Kitty! Kitty!" down the hall and grinned when shortly the man came in, red faced but triumphant. "She was in the state bedroom, in the middle of the silk bedspread, sharpening her claws. Lucky Mrs. Lincoln didn't catch her."

Lincoln placed the purring yellow ball on his shoulder. "Hear that, sister?" he demanded. "If the Missis catches you there, you won't have any tail left. You sharpen your claws on Thad Stevens' shin, after this."

With Dunn beside him he made his way through the back premises to the garden. The dusk concealed all save dim lines of young plants but did not detract from the nameless sense of new life which hung in the air. Out of decay, young growth, Lincoln told Anna Dickinson, purring against his cheek.

He walked along the path just south of the brick wall which separated the garden from the front lawn, draw-

ing deep breaths, his gaze withdrawn. It had been a less crowded day in some ways than he had experienced for a long time and yet it had left him more wearied than he had been for weeks. His unexpected break-up in Stanton's office had left him trembling and he still "felt his insides quivering," he muttered.

"What say, sir?" asked the guard.

"Dunn," said the President, "I reckon there's no doubt but what there are fellows out to assassinate me."

"They can't get you since you let Mr. Stanton put us men on duty, sir." The young man's voice was very firm.

"I'm not really scared," mused Lincoln. "Though I admit that the secretiveness of the thing bothers me sometimes. You see when you join the army and go into a battle you know what to expect and where to expect it. But in my situation, you get suspicious of every place and everybody. At least I do, sometimes. Though, I'll admit, I forget it as far as my callers are concerned. No, it wasn't what he said about assassination this afternoon that upset me so."

"What was it, sir?" asked Dunn, his young voice thick with sympathy.

"It's—part of—it's what Sherman's had to do down South, Dunn. No doubt but what he's contributed an enormous share toward putting a quick end to this war and I can't be grateful enough to him for it. But that march to the sea— My boy, it's a denial of every hope the fathers wrote into the Declaration of Independence. It's the last shovel of dirt thrown on the body of our poor raped dream of democracy."

"Well, the Rebels would have done the same to us if Meade hadn't stopped 'em at Gettysburg. And they were going to try it again when Beall and his gang went after the steamer *Michigan*. They were going to free all the Rebel prisoners and march through the Middle

States, destroying as they went. It's only lack of opportunity that's kept old Jeff Davis from having a Sherman's march."

"That's true and only makes the spectacle worse. Dunn, of all wars, a civil war is the most inexcusable."

"It had to be, Mr. Lincoln!" The young man's voice in the sweet spring darkness was serene.

"Youth!" sighed the President, "youth!"

Perhaps Mary's horror of old age was right—if it brought one such griefs as it was bringing him. Maybe a speedy ending to it—*to die; to sleep; no more; and by a sleep to say we end the heartache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation devoutly to be wished.* What agonies had wrung Will Shakespeare to bring him to that point? Life must have rutted and gutted him worse than it had Abraham Lincoln. For Lincoln wanted to live on and finish his job. A hundred years from now? Fifty years from now? The sweat started as he struggled to picture these United States then. He could envisage Lincoln rotting in his grave and yet he could not, as Murdock had declared, make of Lincoln, *nothing.* It was a thought worth wrestling over. This sense of individuality, this entity that was Lincoln; this flesh, these bones, this brain, were they Lincoln? Were they?

He leaned against the wall, kitten and guard, garden and spring, war and America, forgotten. Who was Lincoln? Where was his home?—

Light running footsteps did not fully rouse him but when Tad caught his hand, shaking it impatiently, he emerged with a sigh to say, patiently, "Yes, son!"

"Mother's waited supper half an hour! Do come this instant!"

"Dunn, you shouldn't have let me be late," said Lincoln, reproachfully.

The guard's voice was indignant. "I have been urging you to go in for fifteen minutes, Mr. President."

"I didn't hear you! Too bad," apologized Lincoln. "Anyhow, I'm feeling better. Where'd Anna Dickinson go?" as he moved toward the kitchen.

"She might have climbed up the wall. I couldn't see, sir," replied Dunn.

"I just saw her in the state bedroom, sharpening her claws on the silk quilt," chuckled Taddie. "I thought maybe you'd gone in there like you do sometimes to think. That quilt's Anna's favorite place. They say when a cat sharpens her claws it's getting ready to rain. I hope it won't rain to-morrow. There'll be another illumination because old Grant will be here. I bet Bob'll say some of the wed fire is fo' him."

"Those R's of yours are sprouting famously, Tad," said his father as they raced up the stairs together.

"Where were you and what were you doing?" demanded Mary, crossly, standing by the dining-room door.

"I was in the vegetable garden, leaning against the wall, thinking."

She looked up into his face, lips compressed, and then as she looked, her lips relaxed, her eyes softened and she said, quietly, "Come in and eat before the meal is ruined. John Hay says Nicolay has got to come home from the mountains, illness or no illness. That the whole contents of the Federal prison camps have moved into the White House since Lee's surrender and Nicolay is the only one with nerve to say no. I don't see why you don't tell them to wait the few days left before peace is declared. You are looking more tired than I've ever seen you, my dear, and that's saying a good deal."

The President began his soup absent-mindedly. "There was a woman in, to-day, who was pitiful. Her seventeen-

year-old boy had run away from home in Nashville to join the Rebels, last winter. He was taken prisoner and landed in Fort McHenry. She saw him there and says he's a living skeleton and sicker of war than any boy on earth. She went to Stanton to get him paroled and struck him on an off day. He all but threw her out. So she came to me."

"Of course!" sniffed Mary.

"I'm proud they feel that way," declared Lincoln.

"Well, perhaps I am too," twinkled his wife. "But you do get imposed on. What did you give her—a Post Office job for her son?"

"She had the surgeon's certificate that the boy would be sick for months and would be better off at home. So I gave her a letter to the commandant to permit her to take him where she will, upon his taking the proper parole never to take up arms against the United States again. To remove a boy from that environment and give him to his loyal mother is better for this country than to let him die or to let him get well in a hot-bed of hate."

"And you didn't give either of them a Post Office! You are getting calloused, Abr'am!"

"Oh, come! I'm not that bad, Mary!"

"You're worse, isn't he, Taddie?"

"I bet you'd be glad he was President if it was your son," said the small boy, seriously. He did not join in his parents' laughter but waited in a bored attitude until he could be heard. "Papa day, I want some flags. Will you tell old Stanton to give me some?"

"You've just heard what kind of a temper Mr. Stanton's in," protested his mother.

"He'll give me anything Papa day asks for," retorted Tad, his mouth full of rhubarb sauce.

"We'll put him to the test," said the President. He took out a page from his notebook and wrote:

"EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War. Dear Sir: Tad wants some flags. Can he be accommodated?

"A. LINCOLN."

Tad seized the paper and bolted.

"Tad used to be so unselfish," sighed his mother. "But he never opens his mouth now except to say *give me* or *I want.*"

"He's at the hog age," said Lincoln. "Every boy gets there."

"You do say the most disgusting things—more disgusting because they're usually true," groaned Mary.

They eyed each other with amused understanding.

Lincoln was only beginning his heavy evening's work when Tad marched through his office waving a shell-torn Rebel flag. "Here, I didn't know that was the kind of banner you wanted. I don't like the idea!" cried his father.

Tad slammed the door behind him. But the memory of that banner with all its implications was with Lincoln when at midnight he started for bed. It brought with it too a thought of Sherman's terrible job. He went into the little boy's room, retrieved the flag and rolled it up with gentle hands. Then he gave it to Crook who had just come on duty.

"Stow this away where Tad won't find it," he said.

"Where would such a place be, sir?" asked the guard, smiling.

"That's your puzzle," replied the President, laughing as he went off to his room.

He was roused the next morning by the dropping of something heavy on the side of his mattress and delayed in opening his eyes, suspecting that Taddie had come to

call him to account for the loss of his flag. But he was undeceived when a rough young cheek rubbed against his.

"By jings! Captain Lincoln!" he cried, sitting up to gather Bob into a bear hug.

"Not much of an officer but a first-class errand boy," returned Bob with a grin.

"This means General Grant has arrived, I hope!"

"Yes, sir! He's at Willard's. He'll appear at Cabinet meeting to-morrow or before if you wish it."

"Can't be too soon, God bless him!" Lincoln sprang out of bed and strode over to the washstand. "Have you seen your mother?"

"Yes, sir! She's dressing. Also Tad. He's running round in his night-shirt, yelping that some one's robbed him."

"Were you present when Lee gave up?" asked Lincoln.

"Yes, I was, sir." Bob's clear eyes left his father's face and fastened on something far beyond the open window. "General Lee could have saved a lot of lives if he'd have seen the inevitable and given up two or three days sooner. One of his own generals told him that. But he had perfect faith he could get his 25,000 men to Lynchburg, then strike south and join General Johnston against Sherman and prolong the war indefinitely. So he struck out west from Richmond with Grant following along south of his retreat and Sheridan racing ahead to get round in front of him and cut off the road to Lynchburg. Our men did as much as thirty miles in one march, exhausted as they were. It was hopeless for Lee, hopeless."

Lincoln listened patiently. He knew all this but he would not lessen Bob's sense of importance by telling him so. He dressed himself slowly.

"Well," the young captain went on, "on April 7, General Grant sent a note to Lee, asking him to surrender. Lee sidestepped by asking what terms of surrender we'd offer, and kept right on running and fighting. General Grant the next day sent a reply saying he'd meet Lee anywhere he said, to arrange definite terms. Then he moved up close to Lee's rear-guard so's to be handy for receiving communications and the running and the fighting continued. We on the staff and General Grant had cut loose from headquarters trains and had no baggage or camp equipment. The general didn't even have his sword. We slept anywhere, on porches or in any bivouac that would take us in—Grant's a real soldier."

This was the sort of detail Lincoln wanted to hear. He sat down beside Bob.

"On the night of the 8th, we caught up with General Meade and ate at his mess. At least all the staff did but General Grant. He had an awful headache and couldn't eat. He hadn't really slept for a week and ate next to nothing anyhow. He lay down on a sofa in the house Meade was using and we doctored him up as much as he'd let us. I think it was Colonel Porter had the marvelous idea of a mustard foot bath and a plaster for the back of his neck. But nothing helped. He walked the floor with pain. In the middle of the night another letter came from Lee. He wasn't licked yet, by Jove, for he said he didn't think the emergency had arisen to call for the surrender of his army so he couldn't meet Grant for that end. But that as far as his proposals would tend to the restoration of peace, he would meet General Grant at 10.00 A.M., the next day."

"And that's where I came in!" exclaimed the President. "I instructed Grant firmly on the 3rd of March, forbidding him to engage in any political discussion or

conference or to entertain any proposition except for the surrender of armies."

Bob nodded. "General Grant wrote back he'd no authority to negotiate for peace. I went out in the yard at four in the morning and Grant was out there pacing up and down and holding his head."

"By jings, the little fellow was crazy with anxiety!" ejaculated the President, "and we all thought he had no nerves."

"Colonel Porter said to him," Bob went on, "that there was one consolation in the pain he was suffering. He never knew Grant to be ill that he didn't get good news and he was getting superstitious about it. We wanted him to ride in an ambulance but he wouldn't. He climbed on old Cincinnati and rode off after having a cup of coffee. About noon, another note came from Lee, giving up and asking for the meeting. General Grant sat down by the roadside and wrote a note telling Lee where he was and to appoint the place, then he moved on toward Appomattox Court House. Colonel Porter asked him how his head was then and General Grant grinned and said the pain left him the moment he read Lee's note."

"I told you," said Lincoln, "nerves!"

"We met in the best house in Appomattox, belonging to a man named McClean. Just a usual parlor, you know. Grant sat at a marble-topped table in the middle and Lee at one near a window. Some of the big bugs on our staff sat but the rest stood around. It was quiet like a funeral. After all the days of gun-fire it was wonderful to hear the hens clucking through the window. I couldn't help wishing General Grant was dressed up a little for the occasion. He just had on an ordinary blue uniform with nothing to mark him from a private except a pair of shoulder straps. His coat was unbuttoned.

His boots were all red clay and his pants were spattered and he had no spurs and his gloves were an old pair of yellow cotton. He just looked like nothing at all compared with Lee."

The President guffawed.

Bob flushed. "Well, I know what you mean but all the same you should have seen General Lee. He had on a new gray uniform, buttoned to the throat and spotless and a magnificent sword set with jewels and fine spurs, shining like silver and long clean buckskin gauntlets."

"All dressed up to keep his morale!" grinned Lincoln. "How come he was so spotless? No one will accuse Lee of not having been in the thick of battle."

"Well," conceded Bob, "Colonel Marshall, Lee's military secretary, told us that we'd pressed 'em so hard they'd had to burn up their baggage and they'd each chosen their best suit before abandoning the train. It's a pity, by the way, that all General Lee's military papers were burned."

"And then—" the President prompted.

"Oh, it didn't take long. Lee and Grant exchanged remarks about having met each other in Mexico in 1848 and then General Grant said that he hoped their meeting would mean a general cessation of hostilities and he gave quite a little lecture on the subject of peace which I thought bored Lee for as soon as he could cut in, he asked General Grant to put the terms of surrender in writing. So Grant called for his order book and wrote very rapidly without looking up except once, at Lee's sword.

"When he handed the paper to Lee, the general took out his spectacles very slowly and put them on and read while we all held our breaths. You know, I suppose, that Grant in demanding the surrender of the army, said the officers could keep their side-arms, baggage and horses."

Lincoln nodded. "Plenty of trouble that made up here."

"Grant knew what he was doing," declared Bob. "When General Lee read that, he said, 'This will have a very happy effect in my army.' I suppose this concession gave him nerve to ask for more. He said, 'The cavalrymen and artillerists own their own horses in our army, differing thus from the plan of organization of the United States. I would like to understand if these men will be permitted to retain their horses.' General Grant said that the terms in the letter applied only to officers. Then he thought for a moment and added that he hoped and believed this surrender would be followed by all the other armies' laying down their arms. 'I take it,' he said, 'that most of the men in the ranks are small farmers and the country has been so raided by the two armies it is doubtful whether they'll be able to put in a crop to carry themselves and their families through the next winter without the aid of the horses they are now riding and I'll arrange it this way. I'll not change the terms as now written but I'll instruct the officers I shall appoint to receive the paroles to let all the men who claim to own a horse or mule to take the animals home with them to work their own little farms.' Lee looked pleased and said, 'This will have the best possible effect on the men. It will be very gratifying and do much toward conciliating our people."

"Grant's the man for me, by jings!" exclaimed Lincoln. "He ought to talk Turkey to the butchers in my Cabinet!"

"General Lee was short on paper on which to make a reply so Grant loaned him some and while the letters were being copied, General Grant introduced the members of the staff to General Lee. Lee didn't speak to any of us except General Williams, who was his adjutant

when he was superintendent at West Point. He only bowed, his face very stern. Of course, it was a devilish hard moment for him. But I wasn't sorry for the old traitor, I can tell you."

"You're young," grunted his father.

Bob ignored this slighting comment. "He told General Grant he'd send back the thousand or more prisoners he'd just taken as he had no food for them. His own men were living on parched corn. He was expecting supplies from Lynchburg and would like his men fed from them when they came. We knew those supplies had been headed off so General Grant said he'd turn over 25,000 of our rations, and that about ended the meeting. General Lee went out on the porch to wait for his horse and stood there striking his hands together and looking off at his poor old army."

"Poor old Lee, you mean," interpolated the President.

"No, I don't," returned Bob, stoutly. "But here's something you'll smile at. When we got over to our headquarters we all gathered around General Grant expecting to hear him say something profound for the occasion. Well, he turned to General Ingalls and asked, 'Do you remember that old white mule So-and-so used to ride in the City of Mexico?' And then he went on to tell of tricks that mule used to play. It wasn't till late in the evening he talked about the surrender."

"Grant's easy to understand and easier still to admire," said Lincoln. He sat for a moment watching Bob's tanned face which even these few months in the army had matured markedly, then he rose and began to finish his toilet, thinking of the supremely dramatic moment his son had described so artlessly.

"What happens first, son?" he asked as they descended together to breakfast. "Mary Harlan?"

Bob flushed and grinned. "Well, not until I've eaten,

anyhow, father. And I'm not on leave, you know, except I can sleep and breakfast here. Where's Hill Lamon? I've got a souvenir for him."

"He's off on an errand for me in Richmond. I hope he'll get back by to-morrow. Your mother is planning doings and I like to have Hill at my elbow."

"I don't see why you send him away," protested Bob. "His real job is guarding you. Major Eckert is as good at diplomatic errands as Hill."

"Not by a thousand jugfuls, is he!" said his father. "Eckert's a great fellow but Hill's a natural diplomat."

"Nevertheless, I feel uneasy when he's away."

"Hush," whispered Lincoln as they entered the dining room. "Don't get your mother started."

"I've a good notion to," muttered Bob. "She's capable of telegraphing Hill to come back, bless her."

But he did not carry out his threat and the breakfast proceeded with nothing more annoying to discuss than the disappearance of Tad's Rebel flag.

CHAPTER XXII

"O MONSTROUS FAULT!"

THERE was no word from Sherman when Lincoln reached his desk immediately after breakfast so he went to the telegraph office. There was nothing there. He found young David Bates and Charles Tinker chuckling over the reply General Sheridan had wired to a long series of questions put to him by Secretary Stanton. "No, inclusively," was the laconic message.

Lincoln smiled. "That reminds me of the old story of the Scotch country girl on her way to market with a basket of eggs for sale. She was wading across a little creek when a teamster called from the opposite bank, 'Good morning, my lass! How deep is the creek and what's the price of eggs?' 'Knee-deep and sixpence,' answered the lass. And at that she wasn't as good as Sheridan, was she? He answered twenty-four questions in two words."

He was still smiling as he entered Stanton's office.

"Have you seen General Grant as yet?" he asked the Secretary, who was standing before his desk writing a letter.

"Not yet," replied Stanton. "I suppose you've seen Bob."

"Yes, and got the inside story of the surrender." Leaning on Stanton's blotting pad, he repeated Bob's account, almost verbatim. The Secretary's tired face relaxed and though he grumbled again over Grant's presumption in giving the Rebels their horses, it was evident

that he was touched. But not by Lee's tragedy as it turned out!

"Poor Grant! None of us have had sufficient sympathy for his anxieties. But I wish he'd come down harder on the traitor!"

"Grant knew the way out of the woods," returned the President. "We must try to make him ease down a little now the worst is over."

"There'll be no easing down in this Department for weeks to come," retorted Stanton with great energy. "And Grant's got to be on the job. We've got to stop all drafting and recruiting, curtail purchase of arms and ammunitions, reduce number of generals and staff officers and remove all military restrictions upon trade and commerce so far as may be consistent with public safety."

Lincoln heaved a great sigh. "Sing on, heavenly warbler! It helps me to realize I've wakened out of the four years' night-mare. But you must loan Grant to Mrs. Lincoln to-night. She wants him to join her party at Ford's to hear Our American Cousin."

Stanton's face darkened. "Neither you nor Grant ought to appear in a theater. Underneath all this rejoicing, there's a sinister note, Mr. Lincoln. The bitterness of the South against you and me and Grant—"

The President interrupted. "Well, I'm not honing to go, for a good many reasons. But I've promised Mrs. Lincoln and so my word's out. I hear you're having a reception to-night at your house for Grant. How about the dangers in that?"

"Surely, Mr. Lincoln," said Stanton, "even you can perceive the difference between a small group of carefully invited guests in a private house and a public theater packed with the hoi polloi. Where's your friend, Lamon? Didn't you promise him to keep out of theaters?"

"I promised not to go when my coming was announced. But I don't see how I can get out of this," troubled as he thought of Hill's care of him.

"I'll talk to Mrs. Lincoln," declared Stanton.

"You see, she and Mrs. Grant had a little sort of social misunderstanding down near City Point and this party is to be one of those female diplomatic sessions where all wounds are healed and all scars declared honorable," grinned Lincoln.

"Humph!" said Stanton. "Well, still no word from Sherman! I wouldn't put it past that fellow to make a peace pact with Jeff Davis, if he catches the arch-traitor at Greensborough."

"Oh, he's not liable to do anything foolish!" protested Lincoln, turning away. He looked over a pile of telegrams in the cipher-room. Then he went back to the White House to find a treasure in his mail.

The first letter in the pile on his desk was from his old friend Zack Simpson, telling him that he had found the whetstone precisely in the spot indicated by the President. And above the raucous uproar of Washington, Lincoln for a moment heard the sound of the sharpening of a scythe and the swish of the long blade through the wheat. He would have given his right hand to have returned, a boy again, to that harvest field.

Mary came in toward noon to tell him that she was about to send word to Ford's asking them to reserve the President's box for the following night. And she asked him if General Grant had as yet accepted the invitation.

"Not yet and I don't know but what Stanton'll be over here to persuade you to let both Grant and me back out. He says there's real danger in our going."

"Then you shan't go!" exclaimed his wife, the pupils of her eyes dilating. "I'll call on Mr. Sumner to take your place."

"Don't be in a rush," smiled Lincoln. "To-morrow will bring its own solution of the problems that worry us to-day. I've always found it so. Go ahead and reserve your box and to-night we'll plan how to fill it."

Mary returned to the sitting room uneasily, but she called a messenger and sent him on the errand, as her husband had bade her.

It was nearing the noon hour when the White House messenger reached Ford's theater. At about the moment he entered the lobby, Wilkes Booth put his head in at the door of the office of the manager of Grover's Theater.

"Do you intend to invite the President for to-morrow night's performance, Mr. Hess?" he asked.

"Yes, of course! I'm glad you reminded me!" exclaimed the manager, picking up his pen.

Wilkes waited while the note was written and placed in the hands of a theater employee. "I suppose the Lincolns will be overwhelmed with invitations," he said, turning to go. "The anniversary of Fort Sumter will be celebrated in a way that'll outdo everything so far."

The manager nodded. "I should have got that invitation in earlier. I suppose you'll be coming here to gape if the President accepts?" laughing.

"Hardly to gape," replied Booth with dignity.

He walked out of the theater and made his way to the Telegraph office where he sent a message to O'Laughlin. "Come to Washington, to-day." Then he went to the Pennsylvania House where he had taken a room for Atzerodt on March 27th. The Port Tobacco man was still in bed.

Wilkes eyed the bloated face on the pillow with extreme distaste.

"Look here, Atzerodt, you've got to stop drinking for the next two days. Things are coming to a crisis. We'll need absolutely clear heads."

Atzerodt was sober and very sullen. "You know as well as I do, Booth, they ain't a one of us will do the job sober. And you're a nice one to talk! How many drinks did you have before breakfast this morning? My old father used to tell me that the man who drank whiskey before he ate his breakfast was a fool and a sure-enough drunkard."

"Have you had your breakfast?" demanded Booth.

"No, I ain't. They don't serve meals in bed to this room. How do you know things is coming to a what-you-may-call-it?"

Wilkes told himself that if he didn't mollify this man, he would certainly foil the plot at the crucial moment. He went out and told a chamber-maid to send up a meal, then returned to say pleasantly, "This room is pretty bad, I'll admit. I want you to move to the Kirkwood House, to-morrow. I've taken a nice room for you there, directly above Andy Johnson's."

"What sense is there to that?" growled Atzerodt. "Do you expect me to stab him through the ceiling?"

"It's mere coincidence," replied Booth. "It happened to be the only empty room on the third floor. You have to pass Johnson's door to reach it. You'll be very comfortable there and I'll be round to see you, and give you a thorough drilling on details. For God's sake, old fellow, watch yourself! Drink if you must but only enough to keep your courage up."

"Where's Herold?" asked Atzerodt. "Why don't you put him in with me? One to watch the other?" with a sour grin.

"I might," Booth replied thoughtfully. "Dave's a good boy."

"He ain't all there if you ask me. But that makes him all the better for what you want."

"Merciful heavens, I hope they'll hurry that break-

fast!" laughed Booth. "I can't talk sense to you until you've eaten, I can see that." He returned to the hall and waited there until the tray appeared when he took it to Atzerodt, himself.

The Port Tobacco man brightened at once but Wilkes did not try to converse further until the last fried egg had disappeared. Then he said, "I suppose a swig of brandy is in order now, according to your wise old father's rule," and he poured a small drink from his own flask into a tumbler and watched Atzerodt take it down.

"Well, you're a pretty good provider for your family of bummers," grinned the carriage painter. "I'm ready for orders."

"Orders are that you keep quiet and moderately sober to-day, and that you study this map of your escape route through Maryland. Look!" He laid a carefully drawn map on Atzerodt's knees. "We must each travel alone. Have a horse outside the Kirkwood House. When you've done your job, walk slowly out to the street, mount your horse and ride slowly for at least five minutes, then break into a trot and start for Georgetown. In Georgetown—"

Atzerodt thrust the map aside. "Why not start direct for Greensborough and see what the folks think of our job?"

"Certainly *not,*" was Booth's vehement response. "I'm the one to manage that."

"All right," said Atzerodt grudgingly. "You want to realize, though, that the rest of us are risking just as much as you are. How does this map work?"

"I've indicated with a red dot the towns where we have friends. You memorize those towns, to-day. I'll send Herold over and you can recite the names to each other. To-morrow I'll supply you with the names of the friends Surratt located for us."

Atzerodt nodded, impressed at last by the completeness of his superior's plans. "All right, boss," he said, "I'll get busy."

Booth gave a sigh of relief. Only O'Laughlin was more difficult than this ignorant lout. He went thoughtfully back to his own hotel for dinner and then retired to his room to work out details and wait for O'Laughlin. Much, of course, must stand over until he knew which theater Lincoln would attend.

At five o'clock that afternoon, Mike O'Laughlin arrived in Washington with three companions. On their way up Pennsylvania Avenue they stopped in several saloons and drank but Mike shook them off when they reached the National Hotel and went in quietly to ask at the desk for John Wilkes Booth. He was directed to the actor's room.

Booth, shaking hands with him, said, suspiciously, "Have you been drinking too much?"

"Do I look it, Great Mogul?" demanded O'Laughlin.

Wilkes gave him an appraising glance. His old schoolmate's pale face was a little flushed but his black eyes were steady. He was well groomed, his mustache and little "imperial" carefully trimmed and his black suit pressed.

"You look the gentleman and scholar, old man!" smiled Booth, slapping him on the shoulder.

"Since you admit that fact," laughed Mike, "I'll admit that I've been deliberately trying to convince three convivial friends who came down from Baltimore with me that I am pretty well pickled. We came over, you understand, to see the parade and illumination for Grant tonight and to have a good time. We've called at four bars and one bawdy house since five o'clock. In other words, I'm preparing my alibi."

Wilkes nodded. "Good enough. And it's only six-thirty now. Let's order up supper and get to work."

"I'm agreeable!" Mike took one of Wilkes' cigars and settled himself in a comfortable chair beside the table. "Where's the rest of the gang?"

"Atzerodt's at the Pennsylvania House. Herold's either with old Port Tobacco or at home. He promised me not to go out sight-seeing to-night. John Surratt's hovering round somewhere. I doubt if we can expect him to do any more for us. His mother is too nervous about it."

"Isn't the old lady sympathetic to the latest development?"

"Well, sufficiently for my needs. She's going to do an errand for me, to-morrow. But she doesn't want John mixed up in the actual deed."

"I suppose she expects him to mix in on the loot, though," sneered Mike.

"Up to date, he's done more than any of the rest of you," returned Wilkes, coolly. "And I may be doing him an injustice. He might come in here to-night. But all this is beside the immediate point. I want you to get General Grant."

"Never laid eyes on him!" ejaculated O'Laughlin.

"You will! Old Stanton's giving a big reception for him to-night at his house. You go up there and mix with the crowd and take a good look at him. You can tell 'em you're a lawyer from Kentucky. By God, you'd pass for one, Mike, with your goatee and your black clothes!"

O'Laughlin looked pleased. "Well, they can't do more than put me out. After I've familiarized myself with his mug, then what?"

"Then we work like the devil to-morrow and find out where he'll be in the evening. The blows must all be timed for the same moment. Maybe fate'll be kind and

send him to the theater with old Abe. In that case, you and I work together. You can see that we can't lay out a long-visioned program. We must be ready to act rapidly when opportunity arises. In a general way and for your guidance I'll say that we might plan to strike in our several places, precisely at ten o'clock to-morrow night."

"I see," said O'Laughlin, his eyes contracting. "And after striking, what then?"

"We'll have a horse waiting for you wherever you say and you must ride like the devil for Surrattsville. I'll meet you there, if possible. If not, move for yourself and meet me at Greensborough."

Mike nodded. "That takes care of Grant and old Abe. Who has Seward?"

"Lewis Payne. We've been able to work out everything there, because of old Seward's illness. I'd like to have had Surratt tackle Stanton and we may be able to arrange that, yet."

The supper arrived now and the subject of the conspiracy was dropped while the waiter came in and out. After the meal, Wilkes gave Mike a bowie knife and a pistol and Mike went off to trail Grant.

Once more Washington was celebrating. There was an especial illumination of the War building and of the White House. There were bands playing. There were torch-light parades. And there was a gentle mist falling, a gray, wet shadow following the shouting, singing mob, first to the War building, then to K Street where General Grant was receiving his friends and admirers at Secretary Stanton's residence.

About ten o'clock, Stanton's son, David, was accosted in the hall of the house by O'Laughlin, who asked the young man if his father was at home.

"My father is out on the steps, speaking to the crowd,"

replied young Stanton. "If you'll go out on the porch, you'll see him."

"I'd like to wait in here so as to talk to him," said O'Laughlin. "I'm an old friend—a lawyer." While he was speaking, he was staring into the brilliantly lighted parlor where he could see the little man whose face the past four years had made familiar to every newspaper reader. The famous general was slightly built and round-shouldered and his face was covered by a close-cropped reddish-brown beard. His eyes were blue and very gentle. There was no one in the parlor less heroic looking than Ulysses S. Grant.

"You'd better go out," urged young Stanton. "This is a private affair."

"I'm sorry to have intruded," said O'Laughlin suavely.

He made his way to the porch just as a band began to play again before the door. Shouts came for Grant. O'Laughlin, swaying a little, for he had been drinking heavily, saw the General come out with a lady on his arm, followed by Stanton and Mrs. Stanton, and other guests. Mike touched an officer on the arm and asked him if Stanton was in.

"I suppose you mean the Secretary?" queried the guest, scowling a little.

"Yes, sir," replied O'Laughlin. "I'm a lawyer in town. I know him very well."

"There's Secretary Stanton," said the guest, nodding toward his host and turning his back on Mike.

Mike fingered his pistol and edged back into the hall. "Is General Grant in?" he asked a young man. "I want to talk to him."

"This is no occasion for a talk," returned young Hatter who was one of the War Department telegraph

staff. "If you'll go out in front of the house you'll see him, clearly enough."

"But I want to talk to him," insisted O'Laughlin.

Hatter took firm hold of Mike's elbow. "You go out in the street where you belong, my friend."

"Remove your hand, sir," ordered O'Laughlin with alcoholic dignity.

"You remove yourself," retorted Hatter, pushing him firmly out to the porch and down the steps.

Grant had finished his modest little speech and for a moment the crowd was silent. In the delicate mist, each kerosene torch wore a rainbow halo and the mass of faces was iridescent. Then the band broke into a familiar air and thousands of voices took it up as thousands of restless bodies turned and followed after the blaring horns.

"Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Our God is marching on!"

O'Laughlin followed, singing also until the parade broke up on Pennsylvania Avenue.

CHAPTER XXIII

"FOR THOU DIDST CALL ME!"

IT was nearing eleven o'clock that night when General Grant finally broke away from his admirers and kept an appointment with the President. Lincoln received him in the sitting room where Mary after a moment of conversation left them alone.

"Sit down, General," said Lincoln. "I suspect this has been a harder day for you than any during the war."

Grant smiled as he followed the President's example, and took a rocking chair before the small grate fire. "People worry me with their kindness. This war hasn't been a one-man job. What would my attempts have been worth if we hadn't had Sherman and Sheridan?"

"True! But you were the bulldog who held the Confederacy by the throat and bit and chewed, giving the others their chance at his flanks. And anyhow, thanks to all of you, *all of you,* the war is ended. Yes, sir, the war is ended."

He fell silent, once more letting that fact lave his soul like water after bitter drought.

"What news do you have of Sherman? Where is he now?" finally the President asked.

"I know he's marching toward Raleigh," replied Grant, "but I have no details. I sent a messenger to him, of course, about Lee's surrender, but no reply has come as yet. I miss the Richmond papers since the city burned. I used to get regular news of Sherman's progress through the Rebel reporters! But I'm positive

there's no bad news. The Rebels would have seen to it that we heard any such."

"Speaking of Richmond, General, that reminds me of a little story of my own. I went around while I was there to call on George Pickett's wife and baby. I heard about your christening present!"

"George is a good soldier and a fine fellow," nodded Grant. "What's his wife like? He married only a year or so ago, you know. I heard old Ben Butler's gang burned up the Picketts' plantation on Turkey Island, in revenge for my telegram to you saying, 'Pickett has bottled up Butler at Petersburg.'—Their spy system was at least as good as ours! It was entirely unnecessary, that burning."

"Tad attended a circus lately and tells me that one of the side shows had a large hog, labeled Ben Butler, the educated pig," said Lincoln.

Grant's blue eyes twinkled. "I'd like to see that show! What is Mrs. Pickett like, Mr. Lincoln?"

"Lovely! Lovely! Though she looked on me with small favor, I can tell you! I sneaked away while I was down there and found my way alone to their little house. I rapped at the door and a beautiful girl with a baby in her arms answered it.

"I said to her, 'Is this George Pickett's place?'

"She didn't crack a smile. 'It is, but he's not at home.'

" 'I know that,' I told her, 'but I just wanted to see the place. I am Abraham Lincoln, George's old friend.'

" 'The President!' she said. And then she added slowly. 'My husband loves you.' I could see that *she* didn't have any love for me, however, and it hurt, though I didn't blame her. But her baby didn't know I was an enemy and he held out his arms to me. For a wonder she let me take the little fellow and he and I exchanged kisses. A fine, big boy! Let's see, how old would he

be, now? I think he's bigger than any of ours were at that age."

Grant thought for a moment and then said, "He must be about nine months old. Well, I'm thankful his father wasn't killed during the war. I suppose the dear old fellow's ruined. It seems queer for me, of any man out of West Point, to have any money, but I have a little and I'm going to share with George, if he'll take it. Butler's burning his place the way he did sticks in my throat."

The President said nothing to this. The contradiction between Grant, the ruthless warrior, and Grant, the friend, was one of the anomalies of war which was more inexplicable to him than perhaps any other; unless it was Sherman's capacity for killing and destroying contrasted with his private character. His mind on Sherman again, he said, "I wonder how those folks down there like being driven back into the Union by Sherman."

"Coffin, the newspaper correspondent, said that he thought some of them were pretty well reconciled," replied the General. "While he was visiting Sherman, a planter came down the Savannah River with his whole family, wife, children, negro woman and her children of whom he was the father and with a crop of cotton he wanted to sell. He had no complaints. Just wanted to make some money off the Yankees. Glad to accept any situation that would let him get a good price for his cotton."

Lincoln laughed. "I see! Patriarchal times once more! Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Hagar and Ishmael, all in one boat! I'd like to have seen them."

"If some one would write the history of Sherman's march in terms of the good it's done and going to do, the South might not be so bitter about it," mused Grant.

"They'll never forgive Sherman, General," said Lincoln slowly. "He's earned the undying gratitude of the

North and the South will hate him through their children's children. Poor Sherman!"

"Sherman doesn't mind, just so he helped end the war," grunted Grant.

"I hope he'll be as lenient with Johnston as you were with Lee. I was delighted with your handling of that, General. I want you to make an especial point of it when you appear at Cabinet meeting to-morrow. I want you to say how you feel about Davis. How do you feel?" a little anxiously. "Do you agree with me that the wise solution is to let him escape?"

"Yes, sir, I do, except for the fear that he'll go down to Mexico and set up a hostile government."

"Well, let him!" ejaculated the President. "Any man that can set up a stable government in Mexico, even if it's hostile, deserves credit. He'd take all his malcontents with him and thus clean the stables for us himself. —No more bloody assizes, General!"

"Right! No more bloodshed," agreed Grant, heartily. "You'll soon make your Cabinet agree with you."

"I haven't yet, even after considerable effort," sighed Lincoln. "You know the old saying, 'Hell holds no fury like the non-combatant.' Well, you'll hear that vindicated I reckon, to-morrow."

"I know Andy Johnson feels chockful of vengeance," said Grant. "But what does a Vice-President amount to, anyhow?"

"A good deal, if the President peters out," replied Lincoln.

Grant's blue eyes darkened. "I'm glad you brought that up, sir. Are you being *very* careful? I make no bones of saying that I think you're in great danger. Not from defeated soldiers but, in harmony with your quotation, from Rebel non-combatants."

"Do you think my danger is any greater than yours?" asked the President, gravely.

"Yes, sir, I do. You wrote the Emancipation Proclamation."

"So I did!" Lincoln nodded. "So I did! And I'm not shedding any tears over that fact. Well, I'm being careful, reasonably careful, that is." He would have liked to tell Grant that he was sick to the vomiting point of being constantly warned against assassination but he wouldn't risk hurting the General's feelings. So he changed the subject. "Do you know where I'd like to be to-morrow, General? At Fort Sumter, hearing Beecher wind the thing up. No one could do it so well as he. General"—taking out his paper knife—"how does a soldier like you look at the hereafter?"

Grant, who, Lincoln knew, enjoyed nothing more than sitting quietly before his tent and talking all night with a friend, lighted a fresh cigar and crossed his knees.

"I suppose most of us are mere fatalists, Mr. Lincoln. If death comes, it comes. If there is an hereafter—that is, a heaven—fine! If not, well, there isn't and that's all there is to it."

"I think I could work myself into that state of mind," mused the President, "if I were a soldier. But, to get down to cases, if an assassin does get Abraham Lincoln, will it matter to this country?"

"It would be the greatest loss this country could possibly sustain! It would set the Union cause back fifty years. Yes, sir, we'd lag and limp at least that long before the wound healed; over the time it will take under your fostering. I don't believe you have any illusions as to that yourself, Mr. Lincoln."

Lincoln sat thinking with his chin on his breast. If Grant was right and looking at the matter impersonally, looking at himself as a tool in the hands of the Infinite

Planner, he knew Grant *was* right, why then, what of Andy Johnson's attitude and what of Lincoln's responsibility for changing it?

"You understand that I'm not trying to add to the strain you're under," Grant went on, "but seeing what you mean to the South as well as the North, I can't help feeling that you've no right to be careless. I don't want to make you nervous—or—or— Well, I'm no diplomat, sir, I know it's a whole lot harder to face the thought of a hidden knife—than twenty thousand rifles on a battlefield but—but—"

"I don't let my mind dwell on that, although I know it's extremely unlikely they'll let me live beyond the making of peace."

"You *know* it?" ejaculated Grant, leaning forward, eyes dark.

"I know it and I'll confess it saddens me, as a soldier wouldn't be saddened."

"But, Mr. Lincoln, how can you know it?" urged Grant, holding a match in his hand till it burned his fingers.

"The knowledge has followed in the wake of a dream," said Lincoln and he told Grant of that rise and fall of a tide of sobs and of the still figure on the bier.

"You can pooh! pooh! at it," Lincoln said when he had finished, "and I shan't blame you if you do. But the fact remains that since that dream first came I've known, and I've wanted to reconcile myself to going. I suppose I have a certain extra amount of self-conceit over the average man of courage and that adds to my difficulty. If a man could dissolve his ego—"

He paused. Grant was watching him with painful eagerness but with something of bewilderment in his blue gaze. The President realized that he was getting beyond the General's depth. The soul of integrity and kindli-

ness but no philosopher was this very great soldier. His simple and direct thinking was part of his greatness.

"I reckon what I mean," Lincoln began again, "is that I'd like to believe in the old-fashioned hell-fire and gold-paved heaven."

"Well," said Grant, "with modern improvements, why can't you? I've often thought that heaven's no harder to believe in than it would be for an inhabitant of another world to believe in this earth. Or for instance for a monkey to believe in the telegraph. What you believe really depends on your mental development, doesn't it? The old fellows believed in hell-fire because they didn't know it was impossible. Now we can't believe in immortality merely because we don't know how a system of immortality could be worked out. But maybe a hundred years from now, folks will know enough. Since the telegraph was invented, I tell you I'm prepared for anything—even flying machines or a real heaven."

Lincoln turned this view over in his mind. "Maybe electricity is the beginning of the answer," he murmured, then his mind went off at a tangent. "Well, I've had a pretty good life on the whole. I used to think it was overhard when I was a boy and I still have an ache in my dry old heart when I think of what I've missed by having no education. I can't say I've had a great deal of happiness, but I've had a great deal of amusement. If I have any complaints to make I'd say the only important one is that I've been lonely a large part of the time. And that the past four years have been curdled by an overdose of agony."

"You're unfortunate in not being able to look on war impersonally," said Grant. But the banality of his comment was outweighed by the quiver of his lips as he watched the President.

Neither man was speaking when, a moment later,

Mary came in. "I'm sorry to intrude." She looked hesitatingly from one to the other. "But it's nearly twelve o'clock and I think you'd both be better for a full night's rest."

"I know Mrs. Grant would say the same," agreed the General as he rose.

"Won't you and Mrs. Grant go with us to the theater to-morrow?" asked the President. "Laura Keene is playing in Our American Cousin. They say it's as funny as a Nasby letter."

Grant gave Lincoln a disapproving glance, started to speak, hesitated, then said, "If we're in the city we'll take great pleasure in accompanying you. But I'm anxious to get away and visit my children. They're at school in Burlington, New Jersey, and if I can get through in time, I shall do so." He smiled suddenly. "Unless as my superior officer, you insist!"

"Jings! I've a notion to!" laughed the President.

"Well, I'd obey," sighed Grant. "Though I'll admit I'm so tired of being tied down I'm nearly ready to desert."

"Don't do that! Don't do that!" cried Lincoln in mock alarm.

"Or if you do," suggested Mary, "take Mr. Lincoln with you! I'd like nothing better than to get him out of Washington for a while. Could you start to-night?"

"This, General," said the President, "is technically known as calling the bluff."

"No, it isn't," declared Mary, stoutly. "I more than half mean it. You two go up to Saratoga for a week and then come back and do Mr. Stanton's bidding."

"I don't doubt you and Mrs. Grant could fill our places more than adequately during our absence," grinned the General as he picked up his campaign hat.

"O if you think we'd let you and Mr. Lincoln go off

to Saratoga without us, you're under a great illusion!" Mary's dimple showed.

The three laughed and General Grant went out.

"If Grant doesn't come, I think we'll ask Noah Brooks," yawned Lincoln.

"Grover's Theater invites us there," said Mary. "But I think I'll send Tad and his tutor, if Bob doesn't care to attend."

Lincoln nodded. "I want to see Laura Keene."

"Abr'am, let's not go." Mary's voice was somber as she took his arm.

"Mary, I'm going. I can't live in hiding and I won't. And I need a good laugh." They were crossing the guest-chamber toward her bedroom.

"I can't get my own consent, after what you said, this morning," sighed Mary. "And yet I think the spectacle of us cowering in the White House as a precaution against attack while the whole world tracks up and down these halls is absolutely silly. And I think the Lord will take care of you. He will if there's such a thing as answer to prayer."

Lincoln kissed her and went to bed and almost immediately fell asleep.

Just before dawn he woke up with a start and lay listening. But except for the tentative early notes of a thrush and the hushed fall of rain, he heard nothing. He was under the impression that some one had called him. The door into his wife's room was open. He crept from his bed and listened standing just over her threshold. The regular sound of her breathing told him that unless she had called in her sleep it was not Mary who had roused him. Yet the impression was so vivid that he next opened the door into the hall. The guard was sitting wide-eyed in a chair, facing him.

"Did you speak or hear any one speak, Smith?" asked the President.

"No, sir." A look of alarm rose in the young man's eyes.

"It was nothing," Lincoln reassured him. "I reckon I was dreaming." He closed the door softly and returned to his bed, saying ruefully to himself, "Am I trying to play little Samuel at my age?"

He pulled the covers up to his chin and lay with his eyes on the gray square of the south window, waiting for sleep to return. Softly, delicately, the rain continued to fall. The room was full of the primeval scent of the wet garden— Where had he left off? Ah, yes!—this flesh, these bones, this brain, were they Lincoln? What was individuality? A mere difference in brain-folds? Was an identical force speaking through Grant and Lincoln, through Fred Douglass and Lizzie Keckley, through Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee and old John Brown?

Suppose it were true. Suppose this was the key to the scheme: a mighty, conscious, creative entity as subtle and as all pervasive as electricity, but possessed of every capacity men's souls and minds possessed: an entity which manifested itself through all forms of life. If so, why? To what end?

Why Jeff Davis and Abraham Lincoln?

He wiped the sweat from his forehead on the sleeve of his night-shirt and pressed forward into the unknown. Why these two men with their differences which had brought the holocaust? Could it be because that conscious force owed its own expression to the laws it had created? Or that having set in motion the machinery of the Universe it must abide by the formulæ of its own invention? If the law of heredity produced Jeff Davis and Lincoln and Fred Douglass and a slave trader, did it mean that the force deliberately limited by a good or

bad or inadequate brain, its own spiritual expression? It looked, yes, by the eternal verities! it looked as if this were true.

It looked, yes, by the eternal verities, it looked as if existence were a stupendously earnest game in which the creator had set himself the task of bringing all life to vivid consciousness of its complete identity with Him. Personality depending on brain-folds which in turn depended on the original law. But within that personality, be it slave trader or Henry Ward Beecher, the creator himself, however hidden by the slaver's lusts or manifested by Beecher's poetic vision. Within both the struggle and the urge toward the light, submerged in the slaver, all but visible in Beecher's best moments.

Perhaps this was what folks would do eventually with the theory of evolution put forth by the Englishman Darwin and so much discussed by Lincoln's friends at the Smithsonian: they'd hitch it up with immortality.

And when as the æons rolled, man became completely conscious that his soul and the creator's were one and the same—Lincoln covered his eyes with his hand, giddy, breathless. For a moment, he lay thus and then again he was conscious of being called. But he knew now that he heard not with his physical but with his soul's ear.

The oblong of the window had turned to palest gray and in spite of the rain, a robin piped in ecstasy.

And so, and so, if he could disassociate himself from this person, this Lincoln, if he could think of Lincoln as Lincoln thought of his hand or his foot, then death, O where thy sting?

The soft, soft patter of the rain, the enchanting odor of the lilacs, the thrilling melody of the robins: all so old, so very old, so natural, so primeval—life—and how much more than life! For it expressed the eternal force that he too expressed—that he *was*.

This call, heard with his spiritual ear, what was it but the wakening knowledge that he was not Abraham Lincoln—save for this moment of existence. Actually he was one with all life forever. The call, did it not mean that that larger segment of himself which dwelt far, far beyond the outposts of human thought, was putting itself in communion with that infinitesimal segment known as Abraham Lincoln: telling Lincoln that all was well.

All was well!

He lay without motion while a flood of peace rose in his soul, overflowed into his mind and saturated his body. It was a sensation absolutely unprecedented in his whole life experience. There was an inexpressible sense of harmony, of serenity, of happiness possessing him to the exclusion of every anxiety. And with an increasing wonder he realized that for the first time since conscious thought began with him, he was not lonely. Never to be lonely again! That which was imprisoned in the poor frame of Abraham Lincoln had envisaged its real identity, had sighted its true home. Happiness! This, then was happiness!— Its other name was God.

CHAPTER XXIV

APRIL FOURTEENTH

BY and by James came tiptoeing in with an arm load of kindling. The President watched him build the fire. That black face bending so earnestly over the homely chore, he thought, was no uglier a sheath than Lincoln's for the creator's purpose. James lowered the windows and fell over a chair in his effort to move softly.

Roused from his half trance of felicity by the look of abject contrition in the servant's dark eyes Lincoln exclaimed, "It's all right, James! I've been awake since earliest dawn. So you think I need a fire this morning, eh?"

"Yassir! It's raw, gusty, rainy, cold!"

"All that on the same day! I hope it'll do better than this down at Fort Sumter," said the President.

"This here's Good Friday. Hadn't oughta rain today."

"So it is!" mused Lincoln. "So it is."

"Yassir," warming the faded dressing gown, "the Lawd sat in the garden of bitterness come to-night."

"Perhaps that's why it rains," suggested Lincoln.

"It oughta be," agreed James, amiably contradicting himself. "I reckon I'll get the other fires going." He closed the door.

The President rose, dressed absent-mindedly and went to his office. He had recalled suddenly the fact that having had his personal meeting with Grant he could relieve the general of keeping a like engagement this

morning. The man was frightfully crowded at the moment. No one could appreciate what a little lightening of the load would mean better than himself. He wrote the general a note.

"LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT: Please call at 11 A.M. to-day instead of at 9 as agreed last evening.

"A. LINCOLN."

Then a line to Fred Seward who was taking his father's place.

"Please call a Cabinet meeting at eleven o'clock to-day. General Grant will be with us.

"A. LINCOLN."

He read through a pile of mail, laying a good deal of it aside to be dealt with later. But a letter from General Van Alen of New York he paused over. It asked him not to expose himself to the fanatic's bullet as he had at Richmond. His first reaction was the familiar rise of sadness in his heart. But almost immediately the sadness receded before the new sense of peace. He drew a fresh sheet of note paper toward him.

"DEAR SIR: I intend to adopt the advice of my friends and use due precaution.—I thank you for the assurance you give me that I shall be supported by conservative men like yourself in the efforts to restore the Union, so as to make it, to use your language, a Union of hearts and hands as well as of states. Yours truly,

"A. LINCOLN."

He told himself he'd show the last part of Van Alen's letter to Andy Johnson. This would be a good man for Johnson to know. He wrote a line to the newspaper correspondent, Noah Brooks, telling him to call during the afternoon. That would let him complete his theater party at the last minute if Grant failed him.

The lilacs on the table were beautiful. He always thought of Whitman now when he was conscious of the scent of these so simple blossoms. Dooryard bushes. The sort of bush your wealthy man was apt to scorn because its foliage turned dusty and flea-bitten as summer wore on. But your plain American liked 'em, had grown up with 'em as well as with snowball bushes and their little black bugs. The first flowers the women took out to the cemetery in the spring were lilacs and snowballs. And Walt Whitman was the plainest kind of an American. At least—Lincoln paused with a frown of concentration—at least the personality the world knew as Walt Whitman was of the essential soil of these United States, of the earth, earthy. But Whitman's soul was certainly an extra large segment of the universal spirit.

Bob came in, smiling. "How about breakfast, sir?"

Lincoln pulled the boy's face down to him and kissed his cheek. "Captain," he said, "tell me what happened after the meeting between Lee and Grant? Some one said a Rebel soldier tried to run Grant out of camp when he called on Lee."

"He did!" laughed Bob. "But you aren't going to make me talk again on an empty stomach! If you'll come along to breakfast, I'll regale you with any number of juicy anecdotes about the hob-nobbing between the two armies."

"I accept the bribe!" Lincoln rose and followed his son.

It was long since breakfast had been disposed of in so leisurely a fashion. Mary, always these days extraordinarily sensitive to her husband's moods, watched him with growing surprise. This mood went back to the early days of their marriage. It was even more singularly happy and tender.

She took his arm as he ascended the stairs when Bob

had left them, and looking up into his face she said softly, "You have at last completely realized that your big trouble is over. You show it in your face."

He patted her hand. "Mary! You don't know! I reckon I couldn't make anybody understand how full of peace I am."

"You look to me," she said, "like a good old-fashioned sinner who's got religion!"

"Maybe I have," he smiled. "Whatever name you give it, it's made me—"

He paused. A messenger had touched his elbow. "A note from General Grant, sir."

Mary waited at the stair top while he read. He shook his head with a sigh. "Grant isn't going with us to-night. People are going to be disappointed."

"Let us give it up, too," suggested Mary. "People have lost interest in seeing us. I'll have some nice people here for supper and—"

Lincoln interrupted. "No, let's go on with it. If we stay here we'll not have a moment's peace. People are so excited and pleased that they don't know how to express themselves except by coming here and shaking my hand off. It's almost as bad as a New Year's reception. I sympathize with them but—look at my horny old hand."

Mary gave one glance at his inflamed and swollen fingers and groaned. "You poor thing! Then we'll go. If that's the only way out which pleases you," she added reluctantly.

"I want a gizzard full of laughter. I'll invite some one in Grant's place as the day goes on. Ah! There's Schuyler Colfax! I must see him. He's going out to California on an errand and I want to send a message by him."

He hurried toward the reception room to greet the

Speaker of the House. Colfax was a small blond man, looking less than his forty-odd years and with so genial an expression that his friends knew him as Smiler.

"So you're 'bound for Californy, with your banjo on your knee!'" exclaimed the President. "Come into my office! I've got a chore for you to do when you get there. You know this country's going to be flooded with soldiers out of a job in the next few months. It's going to make a bad economic situation, especially in the South where the darkies are looking for employment."

"Why don't you carry out your dream of colonizing the niggers, Mr. Lincoln?" asked Colfax, turning up the tip of his chin beard and nibbling at it.

"Haven't you had breakfast, you poor old Hoosier?" enquired Lincoln, solicitously.

"Sorry, sir!" laughed Colfax, smoothing down the blond appendage. "My dear old mother still tries to cure me of that habit! Just because one effort to colonize failed, you aren't going to give up, are you?"

"No, I'm not. But it's a scheme fraught with tremendous difficulties, and it's only one of many of my ideas about taking care of the black man," replied Lincoln.

"You could take care of the Rebel soldiers by transporting them to Texas, according to Charles Sumner," said Colfax, "and giving their plantations to the ex-slaves. I think myself something like that could be done with the leaders of the Rebellion, unless a miracle should happen and you harden your heart to the point of beheading the whole lot of the traitors."

"There will be no more bloodshed, Mr. Colfax," said Lincoln, wearily. "I've said that a thousand times. I've a good notion to print it and hang it round my neck to save argument."

"Congress will fight you on it, Mr. Lincoln."

"Let 'em. Nevertheless, not another ounce of blood

shall be spilled. No one shall be cast into prison. The terrible debt has been paid by the debtors, Northern and Southern— The great job right now is to help the people adjust themselves to the new economic conditions, not only for their direct welfare but to help pay our enormous war debts. And that's where you come in."

Colfax ostentatiously pulled out his purse.

"Don't worry!" grinned the President. "Increased taxation is just the pound-of-flesh idea. You gradually reduce the taxpayer to the skeleton stage. No, what I want to do is to increase the mining of gold and silver. I'm convinced there's an unlimited supply out there in the Rockies and I want to get the disbanded soldiers interested in mining it. There's no reason why we shouldn't pay our debts and one day become the treasury of the world."

"How are the poor fellows to grub-stake themselves, Mr. Lincoln?" asked Colfax. "And isn't it absurd to think of a hundred thousand soldiers, more or less, prospecting in those wilds at your invitation?"

Lincoln interrupted. "I don't think anything so impractical. But I do propose to encourage western immigration with the idea that the few thousands who may respond will naturally increase our gold and silver supply, to say nothing of what homesteaders will do to add to our food wealth. I want you to talk to leading Californians about this. You're an old newspaper man and a trained observer. Look over the field and bring me back a practical report. And incidently," chuckling, "see if you can locate a job that will be open four years from now for an old ex-President."

"Do you think seriously of moving to California, Mr. Lincoln?" asked the Congressman, eagerly.

Lincoln paused. The rain lashed heavily against the window. "I'm only thinking in general terms of the

future, Mr. Colfax," he replied with a curious gentle serenity. "But I believe the far West might offer greater opportunities to my two boys than Springfield." He rose and held out his hand.

"But this is not good-by, sir," said Colfax, as he looked pityingly at Lincoln's hand and took it carefully in both his own. "I want to come round later to-day with George Ashmun on some further business."

"Come along," nodded Lincoln. "You'll have to squeeze in when you can."

He glanced at the clock as the Speaker left. It was going on to nine. He must get over to the telegraph office and look for news of Sherman and of Thomas. There was always the chance that Lee's surrender had been contagious clear across the country! As he rose from his desk, however, General Cresswell was shown in.

"Hello, Cresswell! The war's over!" cried Lincoln, offering his left hand. "We're waiting for news from Sherman that he's received Johnston's surrender. Yes, sir, the war is over. But," with a sudden renewal of pain in his heart, "it's been an awful war, Cresswell."

"We needn't think of its horrors any more, Mr. President," said Cresswell, "and may I remark that the ending of the struggle has made a great difference in your looks. You're still tired but no longer agonizing, eh?"

"That's it! That's it, Cresswell. But what are you after? You fellows don't come to see me unless you want something. It must be something important or you wouldn't be here so early."

"Well," admitted Cresswell, "I am after something. But I haven't pestered you for many favors, now, have I?"

"No, you haven't. There isn't a man in Maryland who's deserved more from this administration nor asked for less. Shoot!"

The General brought out a paper. "An old college mate of mine is in prison. He's been a Confederate soldier but he's ready now to be a good Union man. I have an affidavit here vouching for his sound character. I want to get him out."

"That's not such a hard favor to grant. You did right to put it in writing. I don't care to read it, though. I know," with eyes twinkling, "that you know how to make an affidavit. But you fellows are going to get everybody out of this mess except Jeff Davis and me, by your constant petitions; which reminds me of a story." He repeated his oft-told tale of the picnic on the island.

Cresswell laughed heartily and Lincoln wrote on the affidavit, "Do this. A. L.," and followed the General to the door.

But here he was stopped by an old friend from Illinois, Richard Yates, now a Senator. Yates wanted another Illinoisan whom Lincoln knew and respected to be appointed collector of the port of New Orleans.

The President had been deluged with applicants for the post but had found no one who suited him. Kellogg, Yates' applicant, however, he believed precisely filled the bill.

"Yes, you'll do, Mr. Kellogg," he said carefully, "if you'll always keep in mind the kind of attitude I want you to maintain. I want you to make love to those people down there. Do nothing in revenge. Deal without malice. In your every act remember that our only object is to preserve the Union. Promise me always to act on this premise and I'll have no anxiety about you. I've got to send many Northern men south until the Southerners take the oath of allegiance. And you Northerners will keep the wounds festering and disrupt the Union if you go there in hatred. And I shan't hesitate to recall any man I discover with his forefeet in the trough."

Colonel Kellogg flushed slightly. "I am glad to make the promise, Mr. Lincoln."

The President eyed him steadily. Kellogg was the right man now. But how would he stand up under the difficult conditions that now obtained in New Orleans? Well, time must show.

"Time is the best prime minister," he said aloud. "But we'll step on time's tail for a moment. I want your commission issued now." He rang the bell and gave John Hay the necessary instructions. "You fellows wait downstairs until the reply comes from the Secretary of the Treasury," he suggested. "I've got to go over to see friend Stanton."

John Hay waited behind the departing visitors to say, "Our old incumbrance, John P. Hale, is in the reception room. Shall he wait or will you clear him out now, Mr. Lincoln?"

"Incumbrance?" The President raised his eyebrows. "No longer, John! He's our honorable Minister to Spain."

"There never was a more improper appointment, I suppose," grinned young Hay. "But harmless. Do you know that Mr. Welles says that Mr. Seward looks on that old party hack as an abolition leader?"

"Hale will be all right in Spain," said Lincoln. "Seward wanted him to go to France. So be grateful for the situation as it is. And there need be no sour grapes in the Cabinet. I offered the Spanish job to any of them who wanted it and they all refused. Father Welles is sore because Seward wants the Hon. Mr. Hale sent over on a man-of-war. I'm supposed to settle the quarrel but I shan't. I'll see him for a moment."

Standing by the door, he shook hands with Hale and told him a story and then moved with him out to the reception room where he chatted for a few moments with a group of Senators and Representatives. Then

he firmly walked out of their reach and out of the house to that so poignantly familiar path to the war office.

He walked bare-headed through the rain, drawing deep breaths of the fragrant air. Once he paused and laid his hand on the new tendrils of a clematis vine that hugged the wall. "Life," he murmured, "life! Greetings to you, brother." Then he walked on, smiling.

There was still no word from Sherman.

"I can't endure the thought," he said to Stanton, "that Sherman may still be raping that countryside down there. Do you suppose that having received Grant's news about Lee, he'll lay off?"

"Not unless Johnston lays off, naturally," replied Stanton. "What's this about you going to the theater to-night?"

"I invited Grant, but he's refused. Don't pester me, Mr. Stanton. I'm in a most tranquil frame of mind, this morning."

The Secretary of War took off his glasses, wiped them and put them back, staring intently at Lincoln the while. "You are looking very peaceful, Mr. Lincoln. I'm mighty glad to observe it. By God, I'm glad! Nobody wants you to keep that look more than I but you'll have to let me say my say. General Grant was here early this morning. He told me of your invitation and I told him what I thought of it. He said he was only looking for an excuse not to go and so he sent you word that he was going up to see his daughter Nellie this afternoon."

Lincoln sighed.

Stanton sighed in return and eyed the President sternly, and then with a helpless jerk of his shoulders said his last word on the subject. "Since you're set on going, you ought to have an additional and competent guard."

"Stanton," exclaimed Lincoln, "do you know that Major Eckert can break a poker over his arm?"

"No, I didn't. Why do you ask such a question?"

"Well, I think it was in 1862 that your chief clerk, Potts, bought a lot of pokers for the various open fires in your building here. I happened to be in Eckert's office one day and found the Major chaffing Potts about the poor quality of iron in the purchase. He proved them to be cast iron by tensing the muscle of his left forearm and breaking four or five pokers across it. Now, I'm thinking Eckert is the kind of a man to go with me this evening."

"If you think I'm going to encourage the theater project in that or any other way," replied Stanton, grimly, "you're mistaken. I have some important work for Major Eckert this evening and can't spare him."

Lincoln grinned. "Well, I'll ask the Major myself and he can do your work to-morrow." He went into the cipher-room and put his hand on Eckert's shoulder. "I want you to come to see Our American Cousin with us to-night, Major, but Mr. Stanton says he can't spare you. This, notwithstanding the fact that I told him what a guard you'd make with your poker-breaking proclivities. Now, Major, come along. You can do Stanton's work to-morrow and Mrs. Lincoln and I want you with us."

Eckert, who had heard the recent interview between Grant and Stanton, shook his head ruefully. "I thank you very much, Mr. Lincoln, but the work Mr. Stanton has for me can't be put off."

"Very well," returned the President, "I suppose I'll have to ask some one else to guard me in order to pacify Mr. Stanton. But I'd rather have you!" He laughed heartily. "Only because you can break a poker over your arm, of course!"

He went out, still laughing.

CHAPTER XXV

"LET DOWN THE BARS"

ABOUT nine o'clock that morning George Atzerodt walked briskly into the Kirkwood House and registered. "My room's already taken," he informed the clerk, pocketing the key. "I'll send a friend around with some traps."

The clerk looked after the shabby figure doubtfully. But John Wilkes Booth had taken the man's room so it must be all right.

Atzerodt was to meet David Herold in the lobby of the National Hotel. The young man was waiting for him, his usually stolid eyes bright and uneasy. He took the key from Port Tobacco and agreed to meet him at one o'clock at Naylor's livery stable. Herold went up to Booth's room, and came down carrying Booth's overcoat in which were concealed a pistol and a bowie knife. He took these to the Kirkwood House and left them in Atzerodt's room.

Atzerodt, leaving Herold, made his way to a saloon and took several drinks, after which he went to a livery stable and hired a dark bay mare giving the livery man five dollars for the afternoon. He rode away to kill time until his appointment with Herold was due.

As he moved up Pennsylvania Avenue he saw O'Laughlin coming out of a house of ill repute with several companions. He shouted at O'Laughlin but got no response. "Drunk, already, the fool," hiccoughed Atzerodt.

Wilkes Booth, in the meantime, was sitting with Payne in the latter's bedroom, going over last details. The

one-eyed bay horse which Wilkes had bought the previous autumn was to be tied in front of Seward's house shortly before ten o'clock that night.

"I've got Atzerodt and Herold out now, arranging for their horses and Spangler will take care of mine," said Booth. "How are you feeling, Lewis?"

"I'm all right," replied the younger man. "But if the others are drinking as much as you, this attempt will be even a worse failure than the others."

"Don't attempt to dictate to me, sir!" exclaimed the actor. "I'm beyond any human curbing now. My hand is steady and my eye clear. But I am concerned about O'Laughlin. I saw him this morning. He acted like a school-boy out for a holiday. No sense at all of his responsibilities! When I do locate Grant's whereabouts for the evening I'm not at all certain I'll be able to locate Mike's! My responsibilities would overwhelm me if I weren't supported by the glory of my mission. You pay your bill here, to-day, Lewis, and give proper notice that you won't want the room after this evening. We'll leave no debts behind us. This afternoon, I'll send you final word."

He nodded to Payne and strolled out of the hotel.

Wilkes was thinking as he walked, not of the details of his plan, but of himself and of the figure he would cut, that night, no matter what theater the President attended. He, John Wilkes Booth, had access to the stage wings of any theater. If it should be Grover's and not Ford's, he knew the employees. Ten minutes and a few dollars he was certain, would assure him of no molestation from them. He considered what clothing to wear. Black evening clothes?—or why not Brutus' costume? He toyed with this last idea for several moments before he recollected that he had none of his costumes with him in Washington. Dark clothing, then, with a

soft hat and a cape. He would enter Lincoln's box from the rear, leap to the stage, pause for the whole house to see him, utter an appropriate phrase and then to horse and away!

He sauntered into Ford's Theater to call for mail. Henry Ford, as he handed Booth his letters, remarked that the young actor was looking unusually well, "which is gilding the lily for the best-looking man in Washington!"

Booth laughed and, taking the letters, seated himself on the doorsill to read them. Ford watched the beautiful face admiringly for a moment, then he said with a grin, "Booth, the President has the State box to-night. He's bringing Grant and possibly General Lee!"

Wilkes looked up from the long letter he was reading and said, angrily, "Never! Lee wouldn't let himself be paraded as the Romans did their captives!"

"Of course, I'm only joking about Lee," returned Ford. "But Lincoln and Grant will be here."

Booth caught his lower lip in his teeth and, folding his letter, rose and started thoughtfully for the Kirkwood House. He was as much worried about Atzerodt's morale as he was about O'Laughlin's. His first move would be to investigate Johnson's quarters and see what he could do to complete the details of Port Tobacco's job. Reaching the Kirkwood he wrote this message on a card:

"For Mr. Andrew Johnson: Don't wish to disturb you; are you at home?

"J. W. Booth."

A boy took the card to the Vice-President's room but Johnson was not in and Wilkes strolled out to the Avenue again where he stood thinking and shivering in the bleak wind. He'd better drop in on Mrs. Surratt and

ask her to take his field-glasses out to Surrattsville and while there check up the landlord to see that he would be on the job that night to hand over the weapons and the rope he'd been concealing. The rope especially! It might, when stretched across the road, prove to be more efficacious in throwing horses than pistol shots in the dark. But before he called on Mrs. Surratt, he'd go to Grover's Theater for the rest of his mail.

He moved slowly on, dreaming, and all but ran into Mike O'Laughlin who caught him by the arm and said mysteriously, "Guess who's in town!"

Booth stared at O'Laughlin. "You may not be drunk —but you certainly look it."

"Oh, shut up and listen!" Mike put his lips to Wilkes' ear and whispered, "Surratt's here. He's in Booker's barber-shop. Come in and get a haircut."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Wilkes. "If this isn't like Providence, I don't know what is!" He slapped O'Laughlin on the back and they hurried together to the shop, near Grover's Theater.

John Surratt was lying in a chair, getting a shave. He winked at Booth who slid into the next chair, demanding that his hair be trimmed, while O'Laughlin ordered a thorough face steaming. It was a half hour later when the three emerged refreshed into E Street, before anything of a private nature passed among the three. Then Wilkes said, quietly:

"To-night at Ford's, John, at ten minutes past ten. You be there at ten to call the hour to my watchers in front, as agreed upon. That's all I want of you."

Surratt nodded, carelessly. "I'm going up to Canada to-night, so don't look for me, afterward."

"Good luck to you!" They shook hands and parted.

O'Laughlin said, "We mustn't be seen too often to-

gether. I'll drop round to the stable during the afternoon." He strolled away.

Booth, who had been quite unconscious during this short interview of the world about him, suddenly realized that people about him were cheering and he came out of his preoccupation in time to see General Grant drive past. The General's carriage was moving rapidly. He was on his way to the White House.

Promptly at eleven, Lincoln brought Grant into his office where members of the Cabinet awaited them. Stanton had not arrived but Father Welles was prompt as usual. Fred Seward was standing modestly in the shadows.

"How's your father, Fred?" asked the President as Grant and Welles shook hands.

"A little better, I think, sir," replied the young man. "He's really a great Stoic, Mr. Lincoln. I wish I believed I could endure pain half as well as he does."

Lincoln nodded. "Give him my love and tell him I'll get over to see him soon."

"Thank you, sir." Fred moved back to make way for Hugh McCulloch.

The President greeted the newcomer, then walked over to his desk chair and dropped into it a little wearily while Grant held his symposium. McCulloch, he thought already was showing in his keen, clean-shaven face the wear and tear of his few weeks as Secretary of the all but bankrupt Treasury. Eight months of that terrific burden had almost killed Fessenden. Lincoln wondered again how Chase had managed actually to thrive under his long tenure of the office. It was as thankless a job as the Presidency. The general public had no understanding of its technicalities and always united with Congress in berating and belittling the men who sacrificed themselves to its extraordinary intricacies.

Handsome, whiskered Speed came in, panting, and after him Postmaster-General Dennison, smooth-shaven too and with delicate features. And Usher, also without whiskers. Perhaps Mary's suggestion was prophetic and whiskers were going to accompany the hoop-skirt into oblivion!

Grant looked bored but he was answering patiently all the questions the Cabinet members were pouring out on him. In a pause for breath, Welles asked for news of Sherman.

Grant shook his head, as he seated himself near the President. "I'm anxiously waiting to hear. He ought to be in Raleigh now."

"What is his attitude on peace terms, General?" asked Dennison. "The same as yours?"

"Of course, neither Sherman nor I make the peace terms," replied Grant impatiently. "That's not the soldier's job. And I'm glad of it. Although I heartily wish General Lee represented the South rather than Jeff Davis. In our talk the day after the surrender I said to Lee, 'General, will you go and meet Mr. Lincoln? I don't know where he is. He might be at City Point or at Richmond or in Washington, but I want you to meet him. Whatever you and he agree upon will be satisfactory to the reasonable people of the North and South. If you and Mr. Lincoln will agree upon terms, your influence in the South will make Southern people accept what you accept and Mr. Lincoln's influence in the North will have the same effect on Northerners and all my influence will be added to Mr. Lincoln's.' General Lee looked pleased and said he would be delighted to do anything in the world he could to bring about a pacification. But he added, 'General Grant, you know I'm a soldier of the Confederate Army and I can't meet Mr.

Lincoln. I don't know what Mr. Davis is going to do and I can't undertake to make terms of any kind.' "

Lincoln felt very much moved by this sudden statement of confidence in him from Grant. He waited a moment for comments from the Cabinet members but only Welles seized the opportunity. The Secretary cleared his throat. "Mr. Lincoln has been the steady and abiding friend of the South. No one is better qualified than you are or I am to testify to what the strength of the President's friendship is, General Grant. We both have been the recipients of its unchanging qualities for four years." His eyes were tear-dimmed.

"We have, sir, but," added Grant firmly, "I'm not going to let you put me off my particular application of Mr. Lincoln's great qualities to the peace making. I'm going to hammer on that line—"

"If it takes all summer," interrupted the President, laughing a little huskily. "You do me too much honor, General."

Grant smiled. "And you can't put me off except for the moment, either, Mr. Lincoln. I'm going to strike again when word comes from Sherman. The lack of news from him worries me."

Lincoln said slowly, "I have no doubt that favorable news will come soon for last night I had my usual dream which has preceded nearly every important event of the war. Generally, the news is favorable which succeeds the dream. The dream itself is always the same."

The six men now seated with chairs pulled out informally from the long oak table turned curious faces toward him. He was conscious of the varied degrees of skepticism if not of mild derision in each man's eyes. Once he would have squirmed; would have felt keenly this difference from all about him and have withdrawn into his loneliness. But to-day his sense of kinship to

that which lay back of the personalities of these men transcended all the old sensitiveness. He could not tell them he was tapping deeps of which they were unconscious but he would share his sense of prophecy with them.

"What was the dream, Mr. Lincoln?" asked Welles, gently as one encourages a child to tell a fairy tale.

"It relates to your element, the water, Mr. Welles. I seem to be in some singular, indescribable vessel, moving with great rapidity toward an indefinite shore. I had this dream preceding Sumter, Bull Run, Antietam, Gettysburg, Stone River, Vicksburg, Wilmington and so on. I had—"

General Grant interrupted, "Stone River was no victory. A few such fights would have ruined us."

The President looked at Grant inquiringly. The General had always acted a little jealous about that battle. But any discussion of course would be worse than useless. "You and I might differ on that point, General—" he said. "At all events, my dream preceded it. I had it again last night and judging from the past we shall have great news very soon. I think it must be from Sherman. My thoughts are in that direction as are most of yours."

The little half smile of derision was on each face as Stanton bustled in. "Well, gentlemen, news at last! Here's a telegram from Sherman, sent yesterday. 'We entered Raleigh this morning. Johnston has retreated westward. If I can bring him to a stand I will soon fix him.'"

"Is that your great news, Mr. Lincoln?" asked Attorney-General Speed.

"No, I don't think so," replied the President. "I don't feel as if it was. However, let us proceed to busi-

ness. I suppose we must prepare to open free intercourse with the South at any moment, now."

"I propose," said Stanton, loudly, "that *I* issue the proper orders. The Treasury will give permits to all who wish to trade and I will order the vessels to be received into any port."

Mr. Welles gave Stanton a scathing look. "I suggest that it would be far better for the President to issue a proclamation stating and enjoining the course to be pursued by the several Departments."

Lincoln suppressed a smile as he caught the exchange of glances between these "two old bull-dogs" as he called them to himself. "Stanton trying to hog into the navy as usual. My money's on Welles!" But he did not speak.

"I'd like to be relieved of the Treasury agents," said McCulloch. "They're a continual source of corruption."

"I'm absolutely against them. They demoralize whole sections," declared Grant.

Stanton rose and brought his fist down on the table, his usual preparation for an impassioned speech. There was no longer any necessity for this sort of bull-dozing. Lincoln forestalled him by saying:

"The Secretaries of War, Navy and the Treasury have given more attention to this subject than I have. I'll be satisfied with any conclusion you will unite on."

Stanton grunted disgustedly and sat down.

For a moment Grant, Welles and Stanton discussed the trading matter, then the Secretary of War rose once more. This time he unrolled a manuscript and very politely asked the Cabinet to hear an ordinance he had prepared "with much care and after great deliberation, for reconstruction in the Rebel States."

Lincoln moved uneasily. If Stanton would only tend

to his own knitting— However, he'd let him read the paper, and then head off prolonged discussion.

Stanton dealt for the most part with the reëstablishment of the government of Virginia, quite ignoring the fact that Pierpont was already functioning. Lincoln recalled with a warm glow, his session with the Governor of Virginia a few days before.

Secretary Welles spoke the moment Stanton ceased reading. "A proper State government was formed in Virginia when we acknowledged Pierpont as duly elected."

The President rose and walked over to his usual place at the head of the table. "Mr. Stanton," he said, "I suggest that you furnish each member with a copy of that paper for criticism and suggestions. In its general scope, it's substantially the plan we have talked over in the Cabinet at times. I think it is Providential that this great rebellion is crushed just as Congress has adjourned and there are none of the disturbing elements of that body here to upset us. If we're wise and discreet, we'll get the States functioning and order prevailing before Congress comes together in December. I think this is important. We can do better, accomplish more, without them. There are men in Congress, who if their motives are good, are nevertheless impractical and who possess feelings of hate and vindictiveness in which I can neither sympathize nor participate.

"I hope there'll be no persecution, no bloody work, after the war is over. As I have stated frequently no one need expect me to take any part in hanging or killing these men, even the worst of them. Frighten them out of the country, open the gates, let down the bars, scare them off! Enough lives have been sacrificed. We must extinguish our resentments. There is too much desire on the part of some of our good friends to be masters, to

interfere and to dictate to those States, to treat the people not as fellow citizens. There is too little respect for their rights. I do not sympathize in these feelings, either."

He paused, looking from one man to the other with great deliberation. Then he added a few words on the unfair and stupid attitude of Congress in refusing to recognize the new State government of Louisiana and closed by repeating, "I'm thankful Congress isn't in session to embarrass us."

No one spoke for a moment after the President had finished. He hoped that the silence meant they understood that while he was open to suggestions, he proposed to put through reconstruction on the lines he had so many times discussed and that he would override any opposition.

The first man to speak was Fred Seward. "Mr. Lincoln," he said deferentially, "the new British Minister, Sir Frederick Bruce, has arrived in Washington. At what time will it be convenient for you to receive him?"

"At two o'clock to-morrow," replied the President. "Don't forget to send up the speeches beforehand. I would like to look them over."

"If no one has any more business, I must get back to my desk," said Stanton.

"I reckon we're all in the same fix," smiled Lincoln, rising.

For just a moment the men clustered around him, commenting on his buoyancy of spirit and his improved looks.

"That dream of yours seems to have acted like a dip in the fountain of youth," smiled Welles. "You looked a wreck when I saw you yesterday."

"As a matter of fact," said Lincoln, soberly, "I feel

as old as the hills, but I'm enjoying the feeling! And you mustn't laugh at my dreams, friend Welles!"

"I'm not inclined to, after the demonstration you gave us this morning," replied the Secretary of the Navy, drily. He shook hands and the others followed him out of the room, only Grant remaining.

"Do come along to the theater, to-night, General," urged the President. "I can't believe Stanton really influenced you in your refusal."

Grant gave Lincoln an inscrutable look. "I think you take a wrong attitude toward Mr. Stanton's carefulness, sir. We've made all our plans to take the five o'clock train to-day. I think we can make it although I've mountains of work to move first."

"Well, I'm sorry," said Lincoln, shaking the outstretched hand. "Sorry and envious! Good-by, General. Thank you!"

"Good-by, Mr. Lincoln, and thank *you*." Grant went out.

It was one o'clock.

CHAPTER XXVI

"THEY PRAY TO THE SELFSAME GOD"

GENERAL GRANT drove rapidly to Willard's Hotel where Mrs. Grant was awaiting him. As he rushed through the lobby, David Herold observed the small, undistinguished officer and pointed him out to John Surratt. The two were hoping for a glimpse of General Lee. The whisper had gone round Washington that the Confederate general was a prisoner at Willard's. They were unable to verify this but Herold, gossiping with a waiter, heard that the Grants were leaving shortly for New Jersey. He set out at once to find Booth.

He found the actor in a livery stable at the rear of the National Hotel, negotiating for a horse. David, breathing rapidly, paused in the doorway and listened to the negotiations. Booth made no gesture of recognition and the boy, shivering from both excitement and the biting wind, waited with obvious impatience.

"No, I want the sorrel horse I've always had," Booth was saying.

"Can't be done, Mr. Booth," replied the stableman; "that there horse is engaged. I got a nice little bay mare about fourteen hands high, I reckon you'd like."

"Well, let's have a look at her!" returned Booth. "I want a real horse, you understand."

"You always do and I always give you one," retorted the man.

He turned back into the dim aisle between the stalls

and David whispered quickly, "Grant leaves Washington late this afternoon."

"Damnation!" muttered Wilkes.

But before he could say more, there was the sound of dancing hoofs on manure-deadened boards and the stableman appeared with the lively little mare. Wilkes examined her shoes and felt of her withers, then nodded. "Saddle her up and give me a tie rein."

"No, I won't neither. She breaks her bridle if you hitch her. Get a boy to hold her." The stableman spat tobacco and eyed Booth, casually.

"She's got to be hitched," declared Booth. "I'll be stopping for a drink, when I leave here and I can't be sure of finding a boy."

"You can't tie this horse except in a stall," insisted the man.

Booth hesitated. The little mare gave every evidence of stamina and he wanted her. "Very well," he said reluctantly, "I've got to go to Grover's Theater to write letters and I'll put her in the stable there."

The liveryman nodded and went into the harness room while Wilkes held the mare.

"Go find O'Laughlin and tell him to follow Grant's every move," he whispered to Herold. David rushed away.

"Where's the best place to take a ride round Washington?" Wilkes asked the stableman as he returned with saddle and bridle.

"You've been 'round here long enough to know all the rides," replied the man, spreading the saddle blanket carefully.

"Not as long as you have! How's Crystal Springs?"

"A good place but it's pretty early for it and even if it's not raining it's certain not a good day for the country."

"Oh, that doesn't bother me!" Wilkes adjusted the curb-bit. "I'll ride out there when I finish with my letters." He swung lightly into the saddle and rode the prancing little horse out onto the Avenue and then at a trot to the alley back of Ford's Theater.

David Herold, in obedience to Booth's order, set out to find O'Laughlin, but first he stopped at Naylor's stable to keep his appointment with Atzerodt. Port Tobacco was waiting for him, having already stabled the dark bay. Herold hurriedly engaged a horse which he had ridden before and ordered it kept for him until four o'clock. He declined Atzerodt's invitation to drink and refused to listen to the older man's reiteration of his fears about tackling Johnson, but set out on a thoroughgoing search for O'Laughlin. So Port Tobacco went off to brood over a lonely glass of beer.

Wilkes put his horse into the familiar make-shift stable, then sought Spangler. The carpenter was at work with "Peanuts," a stage hand, preparing the President's box. Two balcony boxes on the right hand of the house, facing the stage, had been thrown into one by removing a partition. It would be a long leap from the box to the stage. Henry Ford, who was supervising the preparations for Lincoln and Grant and their party, had had all the usual chairs removed from the box and had had the two men bring in some red velvet easy chairs from the reception room as well as a sofa and chair from the property room.

As Booth strolled in, Ford said to one of the helpers:

"You go up to my bedroom and bring down the rocking chair you'll find there."

"What!" cried Booth, "you are stripping yourself as well as the reception room?"

"Not exactly," replied Ford. "The rocker belongs to the red velvet set in the reception room. But the ushers

got to sitting in it and greasing it with their hair so I sent it upstairs to save it. I'll put it in this corner, nearest the audience, for the President. He always prefers a rocker. How do you like my decorations?"

"I'll go to the dress-circle and observe," replied Booth.

A few moments later he was staring at the Treasury-regimental flag, borrowed for the occasion, a blue silk flag with white stars which Ford had hung in the center of the President's box with two American flags above. On the middle pillar was a framed picture of George Washington.

"Very appropriate, Harry!" called Wilkes. "I congratulate you! How long shall you be here?"

"Almost through now! Is there anything I can do for you?" replied Ford.

"Later, perhaps," replied Wilkes. "Later!"

He went back to the alley and standing within the door tried to collect his thoughts. His brain felt red hot and his eyes burned. He could not remember just what he had planned to do. Herold's news had driven everything out of his mind like dried leaves before an eddying gust. Supposing Grant got away from them, after all? He could have attended to the General himself, in the theater. But there was no telling what O'Laughlin would do now. It would be necessary to call another conference. Not at the National. Perhaps in the room on D Street. Or in Payne's room. Then he must get word round before four o'clock. Or if not, Lewis had better not give up his key so soon. Had he told David Herold where to meet him? He couldn't remember. *Sic semper tyrannis!* That was the phrase which had eluded him so long. The motto of dear old Virginia. He said it aloud in his fine mellifluous tones. His little mare turned her delicate head to look at him and whinnied. A scud of rain dashed against his hot

face. He jumped as if a cold hand had touched his cheek.

"Mrs. Surratt! That's the next business!" He looked at his watch. It was after one o'clock.

The same scud of rain dashed against the office window at which Lincoln stood for a moment after Grant left him. A dreary day. The wind whined through the crack between upper and lower sash. Whine of wind and drip of rain! The old melancholy touched him with familiar pain.

What were these dreams that pursued him? Just to make the case supernatural, suppose that that phantom body on the bier *was* Abraham Lincoln. Even after his supreme experience at dawn, was he any more ready to go? Was he any less wedded to this old machine; this shell, Lincoln; this dear, familiar, ugly vehicle for his soul? Head dropped against the window frame, hands clasped behind his back, he ignored the figures in the doorway, waiting for him. He must seize his moments, to-day, in spite of every one.

Granted the conviction of his real identity with that greater soul, could he be reconciled to letting go of this gnarled old physical being, this house of his mortality? He groaned softly and muttered, "Not yet; oh, not yet! Let me finish this chore. Just this chore. If you can hear me, *wait! Wait!* Hold it back!" He was entirely motionless, eyes closed. And then he heard—was it Mary's voice, or his own or did it come from beyond the frontiers of the conscious mind?—"Let not your heart be troubled. Neither let it be afraid."

And peace once more flooded his heart.

He turned to the waiting visitor, his face serene. It was Major J. B. Merwin of Connecticut.

"Well, Major," said Lincoln, cheerfully, "it's a long time since we stumped the State of Illinois, together!

We little dreamed what we'd go through in these four years, eh? I've got another errand for you." He was interrupted by the entrance of James with a tray heaped high with food. The President laughed. "I see Mrs. Lincoln's given me up. Did you bring extra plates, James? That's right. Now then, Major, show you forgive me for keeping you waiting an hour. Fall to!"

"It didn't matter how long I waited, Mr. Lincoln," said Merwin, shaking out a napkin, "but I should say it was bad for you to take such liberties with the dinner hour."

"Oh, this rush can't keep up forever! People are excited about the coming peace. And so am I. Merwin, Ben Butler some time ago made a suggestion about the disposal of colored troops, after the war, which I think I can appropriate, now the war's over. There really doesn't seem any place for these good colored fellows who have borne arms. They'll get a bad reception if they try to go back to their alleged homes."

"I've heard all kinds of suggestions, sir. What's Butler's?" asked Merwin, spreading a pat of butter on his baked potato.

"He wants the colored men to be carried down to Panama to dig that much-talked-about canal. It's really a good notion, Major. I've gone into it carefully and in some of my free moments recently, I've jotted down my ideas on the subject. I want you to take the paper up to Horace Greeley and Henry Raymond. Have them read it and urge on them the feasibility of beginning to educate public opinion in this direction. It's especially important to interest Greeley because of the wide influence of the New York *Tribune*."

Merwin, eating slowly, said in his thoughtful way, "Whichever of you deserves credit for the idea, it's a

good one. I'm not sure, however, that the fact of its coming from you will help it with our Horace!"

The President laughed. "And isn't that precisely why I'm sending it via you? He'll listen to you, even when you are cracking up one of my schemes. Besides, Greeley's got to realize the war's over and get off my back. Yes, sir, the war's over. Have you read what my self-appointed chaplain says about it?" He drew out Nasby's letter and read it with as much joy as if he had never before seen it. Merwin roared with laughter and the two men finished the meal without further reference to Merwin's errand.

But when the Major made his adieu, Lincoln, handing him the papers on the canal project, said, "Merwin, we've cleared up a colossal job. Slavery is abolished. I always believed it would be. In 1842 I predicted that the day would come when there wouldn't be a slave or a drunkard in the land. I've lived to see one prediction fulfilled. I hope to see the other realized."

He shook hands with Merwin and asked one of his younger secretaries, Edward Neill, to tell him who was waiting in the reception room. Neill enumerated a goodly number, among others the Vice-President. Lincoln pulled the bell rope and ordered Johnson to be brought in.

The two men, seated knee to knee, did not speak for a long moment. Johnson finally broke the silence by remarking that the weather had been especially bad for several days.

"Good pasture weather, though," said the President. "How is Mrs. Johnson?"

"Fair, for her, thank you, Mr. Lincoln." Johnson cleared his throat. He looked extraordinarily sallow and his face was drawn.

"You don't look so very well, Mr. Johnson. I reckon you need to get out to pasture, yourself."

"I'm subject to gravel attacks," said the Vice-President. "I had one last night. Damnable pain. Makes a man irritable as a chained dog. There seems to be no cure for them. My wife suggests prayer, as a last resort."

"Do you believe in prayer, Johnson?" asked Lincoln.

"Well, I've said a good many times in my younger days that I didn't. But I'll admit that several times during this war when it looked as if Nashville was going to be pulled out from under my feet by the Rebels, I've got down on my knees and prayed. And it's certain that we never lost Nashville!" He smiled a little wistfully.

The President returned the smile then asked, gently, "What can I do for you, Johnson?"

"Well, my disease is in Dr. Stone's hands so I didn't call to give you a recital of my physical symptoms. But Stone can't do anything for my anxiety over the political situation! I'm in hopes you can reassure me as to that. I'm speaking of the peace terms, in the light of what you said to Mrs. Johnson and me yesterday. I suppose one of the signs of my plebeian blood is that I'm superstitious. You left me with an overwhelming sense of responsibility and loss, Mr. Lincoln. And that, combined with the gravel attack, gave me a night that was as near a foretaste of hell as I think any one could live through. I'm beaten, sir, and I called around to-day to tell you so and that if anything does happen to you, I'll do my utmost to carry out the program of leniency you desire. When I say that, you understand that I'm not as full of the milk of human kindliness as you are. But I'll do my best to act with malice toward none and with charity for all."

Lincoln leaned forward with a hand on either of Johnson's knees. "I knew there was great news coming,

Johnson!" he said, huskily. "How am I going to thank you?"

The Vice-President shook his black head. "I don't deserve thanks. But"—with a firm attempt at a smile—"if you really want to thank me, prove to me that I'm a superstitious fool by guarding yourself day and night."

"I will," said Lincoln, meekly. He rose and stared unseeing over Johnson's head, while a wave of nostalgia for this strange business called life deepened the melancholy of his face. He suppressed it, at once, and dropped his hand on the Vice-President's sturdy shoulder.

"God bless you, Johnson. Good-by!"

"Good-*afternoon,* Mr. Lincoln," returned Johnson stubbornly. But his face was working as he moved blindly toward the door.

John Hay rushed in from the secretaries' room. "Mr. Lincoln, did you forget your promise to visit the 'Montauk,' this afternoon?"

The President took an apple out of the fruit basket on his desk. "I must have! Do you suppose they've forgotten?" hopefully.

"Not a chance, sir," replied John, scornfully. "Two admirals, a captain and, from their looks, I'd say seven boatswains, with the ship's cook are awaiting you in the East Room."

"Mrs. Lincoln's supposed to go, too," groaned Lincoln. "I forgot to tell her. By jings, I should have gone down to Fort Sumter for a rest!"

"These vain regrets!" John's black eyes were twinkling. "I spoke to Mrs. Lincoln a few moments ago and she said she'd forgive you once more. She is waiting in the sitting-room."

The President heaved a great sigh. "Saved again! John, you've added ten pounds to my weight. By the

way," he added more seriously, "I actually do weigh 180 pounds. What do you say to that?"

"I say it's important if true," grinned the young man.

Crook came in and walking carefully across the room said in a low voice, "Mrs. Lincoln thinks you should wash up, sir, before starting."

"Go out and tell everybody I won't be back till three o'clock, John," ordered Lincoln, starting off to obey Mary's orders.

It was only a few moments after two when Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln boarded the U. S. iron-clad monitor "Montauk" and began a careful inspection of its inner secrets.

And at two, young Weichmann opened the door of Mrs. Surratt's house. He was going to the livery-stable for his landlady and he ran into Wilkes Booth with his hand on the doorbell.

"Hello, padre, where are you going?" asked the actor.

"Mrs. Surratt wants me to drive her out to Surrattsville again," replied Weichmann. I'm going to hire a buggy."

"Where's Mrs. Surratt?" was Booth's next question.

"In the parlor." Weichmann went on down the steps.

He found Atzerodt at the stable. He told Weichmann he was hiring a horse for Payne. They were taking a ride into the country. The horse and buggy would cost six dollars for the half day. The "padre" paid for the rig from the ten-dollar bill Mrs. Surratt had given him and drove back to the house. He tied the horse and went upstairs to his room for his gloves. When he came down he noticed through the open parlor door that Booth was still in close conversation with Mrs. Surratt. Weichmann went on out to wait for Mrs. Surratt and shortly the actor appeared, waved his hand at the "padre" and disappeared.

Shortly his landlady, a paisley shawl over her huge black skirts and a little black bonnet trimmed with jet

beads on her head, came down the steps. She rustled across the walk and placed one gaitered foot on the step, then exclaimed, "Stop! Let me get those things of Booth's!"

She hurried back, to return immediately with Wilkes' field-glasses and an envelope of business papers. Then they drove off briskly through the gray April air. The roads were very muddy but the grass by the roadside was green and about an hour out on their way, a group of soldiers was stationed at ease, their horses nibbling the young clover.

"Now what do you reckon those fellows are doing here?" asked Mrs. Surratt. She did not wait for Weichmann's guess but told him to pull up opposite an old farmer, working in a tobacco field, and repeated her query.

"They're pickets, guarding the road," replied the farmer.

"They are *very* particular!" sniffed Mrs. Surratt. "They never said a word to us!"

"And they're called in generally, at seven," grunted the old fellow. "Pretty kind of guards."

"I'm glad to know that," remarked Mrs. Surratt and she told Weichmann to drive on.

While the landlady and the "padre" were pushing through the red mud of the Maryland country road, Wilkes Booth was keeping himself busy in the alley back of Ford's Theater. It was impossible for him to concentrate for any length of time on anything. He chatted for a little while with one of the actresses who was rehearsing for the evening's performance. He chatted with the Ford property man. He sent a scene-shifter to get a rope with which to tie his horse. He took the property man, Spangler, and "Peanuts" into a restaurant which had a rear door on the alley and had a drink with

them. He chatted to these men, too, very gayly with now and then a flash of bitterness for the capture of Lee's army. And all this time he was waiting impatiently for the theater to be left alone, that he might prepare the President's box for his evening's work. At intervals, he mounted the mare and galloped up and down the avenue, looking for O'Laughlin. And all the time, he carried on a silent conversation with himself.

"I am going to do what Brutus was honored for and what made William Tell a hero. Only I'm striking down a greater tyrant than either of them knew. My act is purer than either of theirs. One of them hoped to be great himself; one hadn't only his country's but his own wrongs to avenge. I hope for no gain. I know no private wrong. I strike for my country and her alone. A people ground beneath this tyranny pray for this end. God can't pardon me if I'm doing wrong but I see no wrong except in serving a degenerate people. God, try and forgive me. Bless my mother. Do You hear me?"

CHAPTER XXVII

BRETHREN AND LOVERS

LINCOLN rushed back to the Executive Mansion at three o'clock. The lower rooms were thronged with visitors waiting to see him. He passed through the crowd as hastily as he could, offering his left hand which now, however, was nearly as sore as his right. He had promised Mary to ride with her out toward the Soldiers' Home, later in the afternoon and so when at last he reached his office he made a determined effort to grind through the grist of callers with expedition.

One after another, his secretaries introduced the people. Nearly all of them wanted something. He signed a pardon for a soldier about to be shot for desertion, remarking, "I think this boy can do us more good above ground than underground." He wrote on an application for the discharge of a Confederate prisoner, "Let it be done." The Governor of Maryland called, asking a favor. "Anything to keep the people happy!" grinned the President, granting it. One of Sheridan's staff officers entered with dispatches. John Hay had just brought in Secretary Stanton and several prominent army officers who wished to discuss certain details of disarmament. Lincoln broke away from them to shake hands with the newcomer and inquire about Sheridan and "the boys in the field."

He scarcely had rejoined Stanton's group when Neill appeared with a stout, much-flustered woman. Before she could introduce herself Lincoln called to her delight-

edly, "Why, Mamie!" and gave her his crippled fingers.

She looked up into his face, holding the swollen hand in her hard palms. "Then you remember your old hired girl, Mr. President?"

"I never forget a friend," smiled Lincoln. "What can I do for you, my dear?"

"My husband is in the army and I need him sore. Now it's over, won't you send him back to me?"

"I certainly will. You tell Mr. Neill just where your husband is and come around to-morrow for a pass through the lines. How are things with you, Mamie?"

"Pretty hard, sir. I've supported myself and the children all through the war and I'm about used up."

Lincoln dug some bills out of his pocket and thrust them into her hand. "Give her a basket of fruit, Neill. People keep us overloaded, as a kind of thank offering, I suppose, because the war's over. Good-by, my dear! Come back, to-morrow. I know Mrs. Lincoln will have some clothes for the children."

Stanton touched him on the arm. "You'd better come to my office, later, Mr. Lincoln. I've got a better system than you have. People wouldn't dare to impose on me this way."

"All right!" The President nodded and after a general good-by again turned his attention to the continuing file of visitors.

It was nearly four o'clock before the line dwindled and Lincoln was just wondering if he could slip away to his wife when a soft giggle from the door into the sitting-room made him turn in his chair.

Mary Harlan was coming in, wrapped in a bright red cape, her face flushed with wind and mischief. She dropped him an elaborate curtsey. The President came to his feet to make a profound bow.

"Mother was calling on Mrs. Lincoln and they began to whisper so I've come to call on you."

"Be seated, my good lady, and tell me what I can do for you," said Lincoln solemnly.

"I suppose that's the tried and true formula?" Mary seated herself, facing his desk.

He nodded. "Whenever I see you, my dear Mary Harlan, I always think of Walt Whitman. Have you discovered any new beauties in Leaves of Grass or has your respected father made way with the poor little book?"

"If you'll promise not to give me away," whispered the young girl, "I'll tell you that I put it on the top shelf of the bookcase, rather behind the molding and father has forgotten all about it. Yes, I've found lots of new beauties."

"Do you think Whitman is a religious man?" asked Lincoln. "You know your father says he's an atheist."

Mary's eyes deepened. "What does it matter whether he's religious or not? He feels the way we all really feel. Father was outraged when some one told him about Whitman's poem, To Him That Was Crucified, but I wasn't."

"Well, I think Walt is going it pretty strong," mused the President, "when he couples himself with Christ and says they will journey up and down the earth together, till they make their ineffaceable mark upon time. 'Till we saturate time and eras, that the men and women of races, ages to come, may prove brethren and lovers as we are.' "

"I don't care much about that kind of thinking," was Mary's frank comment. "I like the pictures he makes of what he sees and the way he feels about America. Come to think of it, Mr. Lincoln, he *is* religious. You know

that long poem on Time? It ends on a very religious note."

Lincoln knew the greater part of the poem to which she referred. But he did not propose to permit that fact to deprive him of the keen pleasure of hearing some of its heartsearching phrases from these young lips, from this young memory which, please fate, never would be haunted by the visions which haunted Walt Whitman and Abraham Lincoln.

"Repeat what you can recall of it, Mary Harlan," he said.

"I learned several lines with which to confound my father, when we come to battle again," laughed the girl. And there was still a trace of laughter in her voice as she repeated:

"I swear I think now that everything without exception has an eternal soul!

"The trees have, rooted in the ground! the weeds of the sea have! the animals!

"I swear I think there is nothing but immortality!

"That the exquisite scheme is for it and the nebulous float that is for it, and the cohering is for it;

"And all preparation is for it! And identity is for it! And life and materials are altogether for it!"

Lincoln sat with his eyes closed while the sweet voice repeated the tremendous credo but he opened them, when she paused, to ask, "And do you call that religion, my child?"

"Well, if you believe in immortality, you have to believe in God, don't you?"

"Yes, I reckon you do," he answered slowly.

Mary suddenly shivered and drew her red cloak closer. "What a day for mid-April!"

Quickly compunctious that he should have cast his

shadow even for a moment over the girl's bright youth, Lincoln said, "Well, what do you think of our Bob since he captured the Confederate Army?"

"He's very modest about it," giggled Mary Harlan. "He doesn't lay claim to any such prowess."

"That boy's bashfulness will be his ruination!" with twinkling, tired eyes.

"He's not shy with me!" protested Mary. Then blushing, she said nothing more but looked at the President in her half-wistful, half-shy way, which was so intrinsically young and so intrinsically girlish.

"I'm glad to know that," said Lincoln, slowly. "As I know young men, they don't make 'em any better than Bob. As the saying is, the Lord made him and then broke the mold."

"I think he's very like his father," murmured Mary Harlan.

"He's better balanced than I am," Lincoln replied judicially, "both by nature and by the educational equipment we've been able to provide him with. You see—"

Mary Harlan interrupted, eyes dancing. "You know you sound like a recommendation for a major-generalship! Like some one who wishes to have a friend jumped from a bank clerkship to the command of a regiment."

"By jings!" cried Lincoln, "you saucy little baggage, I've a good notion—" Laughter interrupted him.

"What's the great joke?" demanded a bright voice and Mary Lincoln sailed into the office. "Your mother is waiting for you, dearest child, and I'm going to take this man out for an hour where even cheering little beings like you can't get at him."

"Won't you and your family come to the theater with us to-night?" asked the President.

His wife answered for the girl. "Mrs. Harlan has already declined, Mr. Lincoln. It's strange how difficult it is to make up that party! However, let's excuse ourselves and run away for an hour!"

Mary Harlan made her adieu quickly and the President pulled his wife's hand within his own and patted it.

"Do you want any one to go with us, dear?" she asked, looking up at him.

"No, I prefer to ride by ourselves, to-day," he replied.

A few moments later, as they walked through the lower hall two ladies bowed and the President and his wife shook hands with them. They introduced themselves, Mrs. Hess and her sister.

"Oh, your husband is the manager of Grover's Theater," exclaimed Lincoln. "We're sorry that we couldn't accept your kind invitation to attend the play there tonight." He looked down at Mary. "Did you send word, my dear?"

"Oh, we knew, this noon!" said Mrs. Hess, smiling. "John Wilkes Booth dropped into the theater this noon as he often does. My sister and I happened to be there and he told us that you were going to Ford's. We're heartbroken and jealous!" smiling. "But we didn't come to reproach you, Mr. President, nor to presume on your time. We came to see Mrs. Lincoln's beautiful conservatory."

A lame soldier at this moment monopolized Mary's attention and Lincoln after waiting a moment offered to escort the two ladies to the greenhouses. "I'm immensely proud of what Mrs. Lincoln has accomplished here," he explained, as he opened the glass doors for them. "Look yonder, at the lemon tree they've got to growing. Isn't that interesting?" He beckoned to the head gardener and told him to pick a bouquet for the visitors and then left them.

Mary was waiting in the carriage and he sank down beside her with a sigh of pleasure.

"The sun's come out for our special benefit," said Mary. "Isn't it lovely! A green-and-gold world after all the clouds!"

Lincoln nodded and as they swung out of the gates he touched the little gloved hand which lay on her lap. "Mary, we've had a hard time of it, since we came to Washington. But the war's over. With God's blessing we may hope for four years now of peace and happiness and then we'll go back to Illinois and probably pass the rest of our days there in peace and happiness."

"I'm glad to see you feel so contented, my dear!" Mary moved closer to him. "It's wonderful when you think of all you've weathered through and of your conviction that you never would. Yet here you are! We'll never believe in dreams again, will we!"

"Wonderful!" he agreed. "Everything is wonderful. Perhaps most remarkable of all is that I've found a philosophy."

She did not want him to fall into a serious vein and so she asked with a little laugh, "Is it broad enough to help a female who is facing old age with her knees trembling?"

"Yes," he said, soberly. "It enables one to talk about the future as happily and as surely as Bob and Mary Harlan do. This morning, I woke at dawn and it all came to me. Whether you grow old or I live or die— Your gray hairs—"

Mary gave a soft little cry. "Abr'am, don't spoil the drive! You're going to finish your job. Let's plan what happens when the job is done!"

He gave in to her, though a little reluctantly. "This is the happiest day of my life, Mary. I'm just full of peace. I can't remember a day that even approaches it unless it's that afternoon when you and I came to an

understanding after the break in our engagement. Jings, what a day that was!"

Mary laughed. "I wonder if there ever were two men more afraid of marriage than you and Joshua Speed!"

"I reckon there's a lot of them, right now," the President assured her. "That's where the story books are one-sided. They talk about nothing but maidenly modesty and girls' reluctance to tie themselves to a queer relationship when many a lad feels even worse."

"A queer relationship!" protested Mary. "Well! So that's the best you can do?"

"It is queer! Nothing could be queerer than you and I doing team work. And we've done it well."

"Oh, I could mention several couples here and in Springfield who have made a go of it who outwardly seemed even less promising than we. There were—" And she began to enumerate friends of their early married life.

Lincoln laughed immoderately as they recalled the domestic infelicities of early Springfield society and he spoke of some of the cases he had handled in court. "I wonder what shape my old office is in," he added. "Do you suppose Herndon has kept my old green bag and my old copy of Byron."

"Don Juan, it was," said Mary with a sniff.

The President grinned. "I got that bag when I first began to ride the circuit and I tell you I was proud of it. Do you know, Mary, that group of us riding around the Illinois prairies were especially privileged in associating with a man like Judge Davis."

"I guess the privilege was mutual," said Mary. "And I must admit that it always seemed to me that there was as much horse-play in that circuit riding as there was a play of legal wits."

"That reminds me of a story!" Lincoln chuckled de-

lightedly. "Judge Davis was always boasting about himself as a horse trader and I told him finally that I was pretty good in that line myself. Well, we kept that up for several weeks and at last one night we agreed to test each other's ability by making a trade between us, the next morning before court sat. The horses were to be unseen up to that hour and no backing out under a penalty of twenty-five dollars. So sharp at nine in the morning the Judge appeared leading the worst horse I ever saw, all thigh bones and sway-backed, ribs sticking through the hide, hoofs the size of soap kettles and the same shape. Everybody was hollering that I was licked when I came up with a wooden saw-horse on my shoulder and set it down beside Davis' old skeleton. I told the Judge it was the first time I ever got the worst of it in a horse trade!"

When they both had wiped their eyes, Mary remarked, "Well, I don't see but what that story merely proves the truth of my comment!"

"So it does! So it does!" agreed Lincoln, laughing again. "Well, we can't go back to those old days but if we live we'll have some good times. I'm going to see the Holy Land and you're going to see England and we'll visit California and find out if we'd like to settle there. We've laid by some money and I'll get to practicing again."

"That's the way I like to have you look at the future." Mary slipped her hand through his arm.

"We must be more cheerful. Between the war and the loss of our darling Willie, we've been pretty miserable" —smiling at her—"but now we dare to face things with a reasonable amount of hope."

"How differently people greet us now from what they did when we first came to Washington," Mary remarked as a little cheer broke from a carriageload of men and

women who passed them. "When I think of the insults we've received—"

"Don't think of them," interrupted the President, serenely. "They understand us better now. That's all."

"You're more forgiving than I am. I can neither forgive nor forget. By the way, shall I ask Charles Sumner to come to the theater, to-night?"

"If you wish. They're going to insist that I have some sort of a guard, so what do you say to inviting Major Rathbone and his stepsister, Miss Harris?"

"Yes, that's a good idea," replied Mary. "There'll be plenty of room for a large party, you know. Bob might like to come if he's not too tired."

"It's turning cloudy again and you'll be cold," said Lincoln. "I must be back by five o'clock." He spoke to the coachman and the carriage was turned although they had not yet reached the Soldiers' Home.

It was cold and gusty again when they reached the White House and they were glad to be back. As the President stepped from the carriage to the portico he saw crossing the lawn two old friends from Illinois, Governor Oglesby and General Haynie.

"Come back, boys! Come back!" shouted Lincoln, waving his arms.

The two men turned and after a laughing exchange of greetings in the portico, the President bade them wait in the reception room while he washed his hands. He was standing before the basin in the little wash-room of his office when Charles Dana came in.

"Hello, Dana! What is it? What's up?" he called, soaking his sore fingers luxuriously in the cool water.

"I have a telegram from the provost marshal in Portland, Maine, which Mr. Stanton wanted you to act on," replied the Assistant Secretary of War.

"Read it to me, my boy, while I soothe my hands," said Lincoln.

Dana obeyed. "'I have positive information that Jacob Thompson will pass through Portland to-night in order to take a steamer for England. What are your orders?'"

"What does Stanton say?" asked Lincoln.

"He says, arrest him, but that I should refer the question to you."

The President wiped his hands gingerly. "Well," he said, slowly, "no, I rather think not. When you've got an elephant by the hind leg and he's trying to run away, it's best to let him run."

Dana scratched his chin and went out.

CHAPTER XXVIII

FATE

WHILE Lincoln relaxed himself for a little gossip with his old friends, Wilkes Booth went to work in the now empty theater. He first examined the door which opened from the dress-circle into the passageway leading to the President's box. Weeks before the manager had burst the lock when he could not find the key. It had not been mended. Booth wanted to provide for barricading this door against any one who tried to enter from the dress-circle. He had with him a stout wooden bar, provided by Edward Spangler. It was three and a half feet long, the width of the passage. In the wall opposite the door, he dug a mortise to receive one end of this bar. The other end, braced against the door, would hold it closed for the length of time Wilkes required for the assassination. He tested the efficacy of the barricade, found it satisfactory and then concealed it in a corner of the passage.

The next step in his preparations was to loosen the screws on the locks of both doors into the double box. Usually the President's box was locked against intruders, after his entry. Wilkes was providing against this. It was possible that the loosened locks would be discovered. For that contingency he provided another resource. He bored a hole in the door nearest the rocking chair, beginning it with his gimlet and reaming it out with his knife until it was large enough to look through or to shoot through. This completed, he cleaned up shavings and plaster dust from the mortise and returned to the alley.

There he took another drink in the restaurant with Spangler, then set out on the little mare to round up his forces.

This last drink made him feel slightly sentimental. The thought of his mother was with him—of her horror and shame. He must counteract that, not only with her, but with all the world which loved him and his acting. He quite forgot the letter he had left with his brother-in-law and suddenly decided to write to the newspapers. He dismounted at the stable of Grover's Theater and went into the office to write a confused explanation of his deed. This letter he signed, "Men who love their country better than gold or life, J. W. Booth, Payne, Atzerodt, Herold."

He sealed, stamped and addressed the statement to the editor of the *National Intelligencer* and mounted his horse, the letter in his pocket. As he rode along the avenue he saw John Matthews whom he had tried to interest in the conspiracy, weeks before. He called to the actor and urged his mare up to the curb. Then he asked Matthews to deliver the letter in the morning unless he saw Booth in the meantime. They chatted for a moment but were interrupted by the passing along the street of a long line of prisoners of war—Lee's officers.

"Great God!" ejaculated Booth, striking his forehead, "I no longer have a country!"

It was consistent with the irony of war that General and Mrs. Grant also should pass at this moment in a carriage loaded with luggage. Wilkes caught the astonished Matthews' hand in a feverish grip, muttered good-by and turned his horse after the Grants' equipage. He followed it up the avenue, now and again riding forward to glare at the occupants until Mrs. Grant's startled and annoyed expression warned him that he was being careless. He then galloped off to find out if possible if

O'Laughlin was on Grant's trail. He located Mike with a group of friends watching a parade of Arsenal employees toward the White House and ordered him in a fierce whisper to get to the station at once and take the evening train to Philadelphia.

"Grant is going to New Jersey on it, fool! Why is it necessary for me to do all the work?"

"Well," drawled O'Laughlin, "in order to draw all the reward would be my guess." Nevertheless, he started briskly off in the direction of the station.

With only a half-satisfied expression in his feverish eyes, Wilkes watched him for a moment before going to the drug store where he would find David Herold. The boy was waiting for him, sober and anxious. Booth clapped him on the shoulder and told him to fetch Atzerodt to Payne's room at the Herndon House. He hoped Surratt would be there too. By six o'clock he was eating supper with Lewis Payne.

Mary Lincoln was having an early evening meal that night with no guests because of the theater engagement. At six o'clock she sent James for the President. He was reading Petroleum Nasby to Governor Oglesby and General Haynie and as usual gave no heed to the first call. James came back at five-minute intervals to repeat the whispered message and finally in desperation appealed to Crook. The guard beckoned Oglesby aside and after apologizing, explained that the President was going to the theater and that it was really necessary for him to go to his supper. The Governor laughed and he and Haynie took their leave.

Lincoln was silent at the evening meal. He suddenly felt very tired and for all his inordinate pleasure in the theater and his long insistence on attending this evening's performance, he was aware of a growing reluctance to going out. He'd prefer an evening secure from intru-

sion in the secretaries' office, talking to Bob and John Hay. He did not speak of this to Mary but when at the close of the light meal Noah Brooks came in, he expressed his feelings to the young correspondent.

"I sent for you, Brooks, because I'd had a notion of taking you to the theater this evening with Mrs. Lincoln and me to see Our American Cousin. But Mrs. Lincoln's already made up a party to take the place of General and Mrs. Grant, so you can do as you please about coming. I see you've got an ungodly cold and that's why I'm not more urgent. I wish I had as good an excuse myself."

Brooks grinned. "I might give you a cold, though the notice is short!"

"Thank you for nothing," returned the President. "I know we've got to go. We've told the management of Ford's and the place will be filled with folks anxious to feast their eyes on our beauty. It will be bad enough for Grant to have disappointed them without me slipping up on them too."

"I'd like nothing better than to go with you, sir," said Brooks. "But if it makes no difference to you, I think I'd better go home and nurse this cold. I really feel sick with it."

"Wise boy!" Lincoln nodded and after a word or two about the war in the West, they parted.

The President, who had met Brooks in the upper hall, paced slowly toward his office door where William Crook was standing.

"Mrs. Lincoln thinks you'd better get an early start for the theater, sir," said the guard, "and she's asked me to admit no more callers."

"I've got a good many things to attend to before we go and I feel unaccountably blue, Crook." Lincoln frowned in a puzzled way. Where and why had that

earlier serenity left him? "I wonder if there's trouble at the front. I'm going to pay a rush visit to the War Office."

It was as if his feet were blocks of lead. Every muscle in his body ached with weariness. He had believed that these sudden moods of acute melancholy had left him forever: vain faith! "Come, Crook," he muttered, "I've got to get rid of this, somehow."

Outside, the world dripped in gray twilight. The familiar bricked path was a miniature canal. The wall was draped with sinister shadows. Lincoln splashed unheeding through the pools, hands clasped behind him, chin resting on his breast. He did not speak until they had passed the turnstile. Then a group of snarling, quarreling, drunken men lurched across their path. Crook quickly stepped between the roisterers and the President.

Lincoln watched the young guard with sardonic amusement. What could Crook do if these bummers really meant harm! They reeled away, however, concerned only with their own ribaldry.

"Crook," said Lincoln, "there are men in the world who want to take my life." He paused and all the mystic conviction of the past months forced him to add, "And I have no doubt they will do it."

The guard's voice was a little panic-stricken as he exclaimed, "I hope you're mistaken, Mr. President!"

The helplessness of Crook's tone roused Lincoln to a moment of contrition. "I have perfect confidence in those who are around me; in every one of you men. I know no one could do it and escape alive. But if it is to be done, it is impossible to prevent it."

Faithful Stanton was at his desk, his beard a curious green under the glass shade of his reading lamp. He looked up as the President dragged his heavy feet over the threshold.

"Are you ill, Mr. Lincoln?" he exclaimed.

"No, Mr. Stanton, I came over to hear of any further word from Sherman." He dropped down on the old sofa and, propping his elbow on the curved head-rest, covered his eyes with his hand.

Stanton stared at him, sympathy and anxiety in his dark eyes. "Nothing special, sir." Then he walked slowly over and sat down beside the President. He had seen him in these moods during great battles. But this was unaccountable. He put his hand on Lincoln's knee. "What has gone wrong since we parted this afternoon, Mr. Lincoln? I never saw you in such fine spirits as you were then."

The President made an enormous effort. "So I was, Stanton. I thought I'd said good-by to this forever, at dawn."

"At dawn?" asked the Secretary, softly. "What happened at dawn, my dear old friend? Come! Don't shut me out in the cold! Aren't we comrades-of-war? Had you discovered some panacea, as you thought, for the blue devils?"

Lincoln's mind returned to that early hour of this long, long day. However ephemeral its beauty might prove to be—nay, because it was ephemeral—was it not incumbent on him to share its perfection with some one who would understand? Curiously enough he felt that Stanton, queer, passionate Stanton, could understand and would bury his confidence deep where no human being could ever man-handle it.

He began the account with infinite difficulty; not because he found it hard to find words but because of that melancholy which clogged the machinery of speech. And yet it was like a miracle—as he struggled on, each sentence came easier! Gradually he sat erect and gradually, Stanton's hand on his knee, the green lamp shade, the

fluttering window shade, receded from his consciousness and he was looking out on a vista that compassed the whole of existence. Even the words he was uttering to Stanton were as words uttered by an automaton while he looked on from another sphere. *He* looking on at Abraham Lincoln, whose poor old bodily machine was so ill-adapted to keeping contact with his larger self.

It was only gradually that he realized that a long silence had fallen while Stanton was continuing to pat his knee. Only gradually that he realized that sadness had given way to perfect content or if not content, at least to a serene resignation. He was ready to take up the trivial round again.

"Do you understand me, dear Stanton?" he asked, at last.

"I think I do," replied the Secretary, gently. "You are happier now, are you not?"

Lincoln heaved an enormous sigh. "I'm better than that. I'm at peace with myself."

"Then nothing else matters much," declared Stanton. He rose and took a turn up and down the room.

Lincoln rose with him and stretched himself as if just roused from sleep. He walked over to the desk and glanced at some telegrams the Secretary handed him and they exchanged a few jocose words about the President's leniency to Jacob Thompson.

"What a relief it will be," exclaimed Lincoln, "when all this sort of spying on one another ceases!"

"It will be, indeed! I thank God for your sake, as much as for any other reason in the world, sir. You've suffered too much. But it's all ended now."

"And for your sake, too, Stanton. You've done a great job! A great task. No one knows how great as well as I do."

They smiled at each other. Lincoln dropped his arm over the Secretary's shoulder.

"I—I have a great affection for you, Lincoln!" mumbled Stanton, turning to throw an arm about the President's waist.

They held each other for an instant in a mighty embrace.

When Lincoln came out into the upper room to join Crook, he saw the guard look up at him with an anxiety which immediately gave way to a relieved smile.

"All right, my boy," he said cheerfully. "I must hurry back." He talked to the guard all the way home about the play, his reason for going and his great love for the theater. "I'm making up for all I didn't see in my young days," was his final word. When they reached the White House steps he said, "You go off duty now, don't you?"

"If John Parker is here, sir. He's late to-night," replied Crook.

"He's here, waiting," said Tom Pendel, the doorkeeper.

"Then you go home to your wife and baby." Lincoln smiled again. He stood for a moment, wishing that he had not to go in and face more visitors. Then he turned to say, "Good-by, Crook!"

"Good night, Mr. President, not good-by," replied the young man.

"You have two callers in the red room, sir," said Pendel.

The President passed into the beautiful hallway.

Speaker Colfax proved to be one of the callers. With him was Mr. George Ashmun of Massachusetts who had been in Congress when Lincoln had been a member. It was Ashmun who had been chairman of the convention which had nominated Lincoln in 1860. He had shown

his friendship to the President in many ways for many years.

"Come upstairs!" cried Lincoln. "There's no chance for privacy here!" He led the way up to the sitting-room.

Ashmun was anxious for news of peace terms and to learn if possible what was to be done about trading permits. "I hear Richmond is wide open again," he said, before Lincoln could answer him, "and speaking of Richmond, wasn't it rather imprudent of you to expose yourself there? We were much concerned for your safety."

Lincoln smiled. "I suppose I'd have been alarmed if any other person had been President and had gone there but I didn't find any danger whatever." He turned to Colfax. "Sumner has the gavel of the Confederate Congress. He intended to give it to Stanton but I insisted he must give it to you and you tell him from me to hand it over."

"I have the gavel used in the Republican Convention of 1860," said Ashmun. "I cherish it, I assure you. But, Mr. Lincoln, I don't want to intrude on you as I hear you're engaged this evening. I have a client who has preferred a cotton claim and I want to have a commission appointed to examine the case."

"I've done with commissions," declared Lincoln, vehemently. "I believe they're contrivances to cheat the government of every pound of cotton they can lay hands on."

"I hope you mean no personal imputation, Mr. Lincoln." Ashmun flushed painfully.

"You didn't understand me, Ashmun," exclaimed the President. "I didn't mean what you inferred. I take it back." Then as Ashmun did not speak, he added, contritely, "I apologize to you, Ashmun."

"It is quite unnecessary, sir," returned the lawyer, recovering himself.

"That matter of trading permits is a most vexatious one," Lincoln went on. "I have in my office now a letter from the Attorney-General about it. Wait a moment and I'll get it for you."

He went through the private passageway and began to search through the papers on his desk. He was interrupted by Senator Henderson of Missouri who wanted to obtain an order for the release of a Confederate prisoner.

"I went to Secretary Stanton as you told me to, sir," he informed the President, "but he became violently abusive and would do nothing."

Lincoln took up his pen and wrote an order for release. "I think that will have precedence over Stanton," he remarked.

Henderson thanked him and left.

Lincoln pulled on his overcoat, then turned to his desk, keeping his mind firmly on the moment's occupation: a half-conscious defense against the insistent reluctance to go to the play. He read through the commission reappointing Alvin Saunders as Governor of the Territory of Nebraska, made a memorandum on it and signed it. Then he picked up the Attorney-General's letter and his tall hat. But he did not return to the sitting-room by way of the private door. He crossed the hall into Bob's room, where John Hay and the young Captain were smoking.

"Don't you want to go to the theater with us, Bob?" asked his father.

"If you don't mind, father, I'll say no," replied Bob, turning a sunburned face and tired eyes toward the President. He looked to-night like the little fellow whom Mary used to spank for stealing pie. Queer how child-

hood persists in the face of a good man, thought Lincoln. "I'd rather stay here and get to bed, early," said Bob. "I'm still tired."

"Do whatever you wish, my boy," he said. "Good-by."

He looked at his watch. It was nearly eight. Mary would be along any minute now. He joined the visitors in the sitting-room, handing Speed's letter to Ashmun.

"Don't let us detain you, Mr. Lincoln." Colfax glanced at the President's coat and hat.

"Oh, I'm in no hurry!" replied the President. "In fact, I wouldn't care if we didn't go at all to-night."

James came in with Senator Stewart's card. Lincoln picked up a pen and wrote his excuses on it. "I am engaged to go to the theater with Mrs. Lincoln. It's the kind of an engagement I never break. Come with your friend to-morrow at ten and I shall be glad to see you. A. Lincoln."

As James went out, Lincoln said to Colfax, "You'll accompany Mrs. Lincoln and me to the theater, won't you?"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Lincoln, but I'm starting for California in the morning, you know," was the Speaker's reply.

Mary came in, looking very handsome in her evening wraps. "I'm always breaking up delightful conferences, gentlemen," she said as the men rose. "I dislike to do it, but Mr. Lincoln and I are due to go, rather half-heartedly, I'll admit, to see Our American Cousin."

"No apologies are necessary, Mrs. Lincoln," declared Ashmun, "although I'll admit I'm disappointed in not having a longer interview with the President."

"Oh, that's easily fixed!" exclaimed Lincoln. "I'll fix for you to come an hour before we open shop." And again he wrote on a card, "Allow Mr. Ashmun and friend to come in at 9 A.M. to-morrow. A. Lincoln."

Mary put her hand quietly within Mr. Ashmun's arm.

"Help me to get my husband started," she said. "Poor man, I hate to drag him out."

The President and Colfax followed the others to the staircase. There they were halted by two importunate gentlemen who wanted a pass to Richmond.

"You no longer need a pass, my friends," protested Lincoln.

"We've been turned back twice," replied one of the men.

Lincoln bade them wait and returned deliberately to the sitting-room and once more wrote a card. "No pass is necessary now to authorize any one to go to and return from Petersburg and Richmond. People go and return just as they did before the war. A. Lincoln."

He was feeling a little languid but quite calm as he again started down the stairs. When they reached the portico, he shook hands with Colfax and told him not to forget the message he had given him for the miners. Then he saw Stewart and his friend near by and he went over to greet them, repeating that he would be glad to see them in the morning.

Mary, sitting in the carriage with John Parker opposite her, watched his dilatory movements with a meager patience won by years of experience. Finally, he put his foot on the carriage step and she heaved a sigh of relief. But it looked as if her relief might be premature for he wavered as Isaac Arnold appeared under the porch lights. She put a firm hand on his and he smiled at her as he called to Arnold, "Excuse me now, I'm going to the theater. Come and see me in the morning."

So at last he seated himself. "I'll telegraph you, Colfax, at San Francisco," he called. The carriage rolled away. "There," he said, "I've comported myself as if I hadn't a care in the world."

"We're going to be a half hour late," sighed Mary.

CHAPTER XXIX

"THE LAST FULL MEASURE OF DEVOTION"

WHILE the President was talking to Mr. Ashmun, John Wilkes Booth was carrying on a low-voiced conversation with John Surratt, who left before David Herold appeared with George Atzerodt.

It was a small bedroom, lighted by an unshaded kerosene lamp on the mantel. The cot-bed was covered with a soiled white spread. Payne sat on this. He was the only member of the fraternity who gave no sign of nerves. His gray eyes were clear and from under his heavy black brows they did not stray from Booth's face. His curiously large nostrils quivered from time to time but this was as habitual with Payne as with a rabbit. His big soft hands hung motionless between his knees.

Atzerodt, down at heel as usual, his short gray coat ragged and stained, his collarless shirt flecked by tobacco juice, his greasy hair hanging on his collar, was the beau-ideal of the assassin. He sat on the edge of a straight, cane-seated chair, chewing violently and swallowing the spit with an audible movement of his enormous Adam's apple. His bleared blue eyes shifted from one to another of his friends, and he constantly scratched his left palm with the dirty, broken nails of his right hand.

David Herold had aged curiously in the few months of his contact with Booth. It was not only that he looked dissipated but that there were deep lines from his lips to his nostrils and his weak chin trembled like an old

man's. David was too much excited to sit still. He roamed about the room.

Booth's black eyes were brilliant. His olive cheeks burned. His clothing, a dark morning suit, was of elegant cut and immaculate. He gave his orders clearly although he had drunk double his usual ration since noon.

"You, Dave," he said, "are to do two jobs. First guide Lewis Payne to Seward's house. See him well inside and that his horse is ready at the hitching post, then go to the Kirkwood House, and act as support to Atzerodt when at ten minutes past ten he goes into Johnson's room."

"How do you know Andy'll be there?" demanded Port Tobacco.

"He's in his room, right now," declared Herold, "and I heard him tell a man he could be reached there all the evening."

"That ain't no reason I can reach him," muttered Atzerodt, scratching his palm viciously.

Booth gave him an anxious glance out of his beautiful black eyes but continued to speak, calmly. "After Atzerodt has settled with Andy, Dave, you see him mounted and on his way, then you ride like the devil after me, out over the Navy Yard Bridge to Surrattsville. If I'm not there yet, collect the things Mrs. Surratt has left with Lloyd and wait in the road in front of the tavern for me."

"Yes, little pet!" sneered Atzerodt. "All the glory and cash and none of the bloody work."

"What's the matter with you, old man?" pleaded Booth, keeping a tight grip on his temper.

"You let Dave and me change jobs and there won't be nothing the matter with me."

"Dave's not strong enough. It takes a man's muscles

to do this, George, and no ordinary man, either. You and Lewis are each in your way perfect gladiators. Poor Dave's just a plucked chicken. Come, take a drink and cheer up!"

But for perhaps the only time in his life, Atzerodt refused to drink. "I just as soon kidnap but I don't want to kill—not Andy Johnson anyhow. And stabbing's no way for a white man."

"I suppose if you'd been in the army you'd have refused to use a bayonet on the damned Yankees," cried Herold.

"You shut your baby mouth!" snarled Atzerodt. "Using a bayonet in an open battle ain't sneaking into a man's room and sticking a knife in him in the dark."

"Use the pistol I left you then," urged Booth. "Look here, George, you aren't going to ruin everything for me, are you? Andy Johnson is old Abe's man. Not much use in getting rid of the tyrant if we leave his successor to continue the tyranny."

"What do I care about tyrants?" shouted Port Tobacco.

"Sh-sh!" said Payne.

Booth did not raise his voice but it was none the less violent as he whispered, "You dirty, damned coward! I've a notion to force you to do this at the point of my own gun. By God, you do it or I'll see that you hang, anyhow. When I've reached safety in Greensborough, I'll send back the evidence that'll put the rope around your neck. I'll hang you, if you fail me, dirty Atzerodt!"

Port Tobacco's jaw dropped, disclosing his mahogany-colored tongue. "You wouldn't do that!" he whimpered. "God! where's your heart, Mr. Booth? What have I ever done to you except wait on you and take care of you?"

"Nothing that you've done weighs a snap of my finger

with me unless you destroy Andy Johnson," hissed Booth. "Come now, we'll go to the stable and see that your horse is in good condition. Lewis, give me your hand, brave friend. I'll see you in Greensborough. And you, faithful David"—patting his shoulder—"will meet me at Surrattsville. At ten, Lewis and Herold, leave here and go direct to Seward. At ten minutes after ten, George, you enter Johnson's room. And at ten or a little after, when I know the stage will be practically empty, I'll finish Abe."

He led Atzerodt down the stairs and to the Avenue, talking at first soothingly. But when they had reached the stable and had found Atzerodt's horse saddled and waiting, he took Port Tobacco back into the street and said in a voice of implacable ugliness, "You do the job, or you hang, damn you!" then he strode off toward Ford's Theater.

Atzerodt started back to eat another supper at an oyster bar. He still was undetermined what course to pursue. Mike O'Laughlin, apparently very drunk, met him on the Avenue. George grasped him by the arm and whispered in his ear, "How about Grant?"

With alcoholic gravity, Mike whispered in Atzerodt's hairy ear. "To hell with Grant! He eschcaped me, the dirty sojer man!" and he walked on with his friends.

"Well, I reckon I'm going to wash my hands of it, too," thought Port Tobacco. And he began looking for a hiding place after first throwing away his bowie knife.

Booth on leaving Atzerodt went to the stable back of Ford's and saddled the little mare. He led her then up to the stage door and said to a stage hand, "Tell Spangler to come out here and hold my horse."

The man disappeared to return in a moment with Spangler. "I can't hold her, Mr. Booth," explained Spangler, "I've got to shift the next scene. Here, 'Pea-

nuts' "—calling to the door-keeper—"you hold Mr. Booth's horse. You don't have to leave your door to do it."

So "Peanuts" sat down on his bench just outside the door and took the mare's reins. Wilkes went into the rear of the theater, crossed under the stage through a passage and so out on Tenth Street and to the front of the theater.

The front door-keeper was standing in the doorway, looking into the house, with one arm barring the entry way. Wilkes quietly took two fingers of the hand on the door frame and shook them. "You don't want a ticket from me, do you?"

The door-keeper smiled in a friendly way. "I guess I don't, Mr. Booth," and lowered his arm.

Wilkes went into the theater and thoroughly surveyed the house. He watched the motionless figure of the President, glanced at the stage to note the progress of the play and went quietly up the stairs to the dress-circle and along the passage toward the state boxes. John Parker's chair was empty. A moment later he had located the guard sitting in a front seat of the first gallery. He sighed with relief and returned to the lobby. The door-keeper was talking with some out-of-town friends and he pointed the famous tragedian out to them, even summoning courage, as Booth remained in the lobby, to introduce the strangers to him. Wilkes laughed and talked genially until they returned to their seats for the next act. Then he asked the door-keeper for a chew of tobacco, which was gladly given.

He was thinking not only of his own immediate task but of Atzerodt and of Payne.

Payne, while Booth was negotiating the chew of plug, was arguing with the colored servant who answered his ring at Seward's door. Payne insisted that the package

in his hand was medicine sent by Dr. Verdi which he was to deliver in person with instructions how it was to be taken. The servant was firm in his stand that Mr. Seward could not be seen. But Payne was very insistent and overbearing and the colored man, intimidated, gave way. At the stair top Frederick Seward, the Assistant Treasurer, met Lewis and sternly forbade him to enter the sick-room. Lewis started to go back down the stairs but suddenly turned and knocked Frederick down with his pistol, fracturing his skull. Sergeant Robinson, Secretary Seward's nurse, opened the door and Payne cut him in the face with his knife, knocking him off his balance and rushed past him to the Secretary's bed. He tried to shoot the helpless man but the blow given Frederick Seward had bent the hammer. He then stabbed Seward three times in the face and neck. But the steel frame which held the Secretary's broken jaw deflected the blows and saved his life.

Sergeant Robinson recovered himself and, rushing to the bed, grappled with Payne. Seward rolled off the bed to the floor on the opposite side. There was a desperate wrestling match between Robinson and Payne, Payne stabbing with one hand and using the pistol as a club with the other.

Augustus Seward, the younger son, wakened at last, leaped into the room and together he and Robinson dragged Payne into the hall. Here Lewis freed himself and howling, "I'm mad! I'm mad!" rushed down the stairs, wounding a messenger from the State Department whom he passed.

The colored man had run out into the street, screaming "Murder!" Dave Herold, immediately deserting his post, set spurs to his horse for Surrattsville. Payne mounted the remaining beast and started like the madman he called himself, whither he was not sure.

It was nearly ten minutes past ten.

In the street before Ford's the President's carriage was waiting. Wilkes Booth, sauntering up and down, went into the saloon next door and took a last drink of whiskey. As he came back to the lobby he heard Surratt say that it was ten minutes past ten. Booth went resolutely up the stairs to the President's box.

Lincoln in his rocking chair felt a sudden chill and rose to put on his overcoat.

"Are you catching cold?" whispered Mary under cover of a prolonged laugh from the audience. "It's really very warm in the theater."

"I don't see how you women stand it with your bare shoulders," whispered Lincoln in return. "Still I don't blame you. Your neck and shoulders are lovelier than little Miss Todd's ever were, my darling wife."

She looked up at him with quick understanding. "You aren't going to let me grow old if you can help it, are you, my dear! Are you enjoying the play?"

He nodded and Mary turned her attention again to the stage.

Lincoln was not sorry after all that he had come. The play was extraordinarily funny and still it made no great demands on his tired brain. He was able to enjoy its foolishness and at the same time to ponder serenely on all that had been working in his inner mind during the past weeks.

After all, Mary had spoken truly when she had said that his death would not wreck the Union. If democracy was right, if it belonged in evolution, its persistence in the life of governments was not dependent on any one man. If, as he believed, democracy was one of the qualities essential for the growth of humanity's consciousness of its one-ness with its creator, then Abraham Lincoln

was only one of an infinite number of tools for shaping man toward that great end.

This tired, rattling old piece of machinery, this Abraham Lincoln—well, what next for him? Had he wrought well enough to go further in what Walt Whitman called the exquisite scheme? Had he?

He caught his breath as again that ineffable call reached his soul; deep speaking to deep. That greater self, beyond the far outposts, was reaching out again to this lonely portion of itself; so lost; so lonely; but now so conscious of its ultimate immortal destiny!

He was conscious of a sudden blow on the back of his head but he did not move.

" 'For thou didst call me!' " he murmured.

And surely, beyond the sudden strange uproar from the audience he heard that superlatively convincing answer:

"All is well!"

PARTIAL LIST OF BOOKS READ

Official Records of the War, Vols. 3, 8, 45, 47, 48, 46, 49.
Letters and Recollections, *John Murray Forbes.*
Letters, *James Russell Lowell.*
Home Letters, *W. T. Sherman.*
My Story of the War, *Mary A. Livermore.*
Campaigning With Grant, *Horace Porter.*
Personal Memoirs, *P. H. Sheridan.*
Memoirs, *W. T. Sherman.*
Surrender at Appomattox Court House, *Horace Porter.* Century War Book IV.
Lincoln's Last Day, *John W. Starr, Jr.*
Life of J. W. Booth, *G. W. Townsend.*
Southern Historical Society Papers, Vols. IX, XXXII.
The Struggles of Petroleum V. Nasby, *David R. Locke.*
Majority and Minority Reports on Assassination of Lincoln. House Report 104, 39th Congress, 1st Session.
New York Times, 1864-5.
The St. Albans Raid, *L. N. Benjamin.*
The Assassination of Lincoln, 1865, *Benn Pitman.*
Abraham Lincoln. A History, Vol. X, *Nicolay and Hay.*
John Wilkes Booth, *Francis Wilson.*
Lincoln's Assassination, *Samuel B. Arnold.*
Assassination of Abraham Lincoln, *David M. DeWitt.*
Assassination of Abraham Lincoln, *T. M. Harris.*
His Life by His Daughter, *Samuel Mudd.*
Diary, Vol. II, *Gideon Wells.*
The Lost Cause, *E. A. Pollard.*
Personal Memoirs, Vol. II, *U. S. Grant.*
Reminiscences of Lincoln, *A. T. Rice.*
History of U. S., Vol. V, *T. F. Rhodes.*
Recollections of Lincoln, *W. H. Lamon.*
Lincoln in the Telegraph Office, *D. H. Bates.*

THROUGH FIVE ADMINISTRATIONS, *W. H. Crook.*
MARY, WIFE OF LINCOLN, *Katherine Helm.*
AN AIDE-DE-CAMP OF LEE, *General Sir Frederick Maurice.*
MEMORIES, *M. B. Field.*
ANDREW JOHNSON, *C. R. Hall.*
ANDREW JOHNSON, *L. P. Stryker.*
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SEVENTY YEARS, *G. F. Hoar.*
LETTERS IN "HEART OF A SOLDIER," *George E. Pickett.*
LIFE AND LETTERS OF GEORGE BANCROFT, *M. H. D. Howe.*
THE SHERMAN LETTERS, *Rachel Sherman Thorndyke.*
MEN AND MEASURES OF HALF A CENTURY, *Hugh McCulloch.*
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE CIVIL WAR, *C. A. Dana.*
LIFE OF JOHN A. ANDREW, *H. G. Pearson.*
THE DEATH OF LINCOLN, *Clara Laughlin.*
ASSASSINATION OF LINCOLN, *O. H. Oldroyd.*

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I HAVE been asked so many times how much of my novels on Lincoln are fact and how much fiction that I am adding to this bibliography a short account of my method of work. This list covers only partially the number of books read. My habit has been to read not only direct biographies of Lincoln and histories of the Rebellion but also to read every biography, memoir and collection of letters I could find which was produced by men and women who came in contact with Lincoln and his administration. Many of these books, I have read several times, taking notes constantly. The notes on *The Last Full Measure* amount to about three hundred thousand words of fact statements and are limited in scope to the last six months of Lincoln's life.

When the taking of these notes was completed, I arranged them all in a time sequence, then separated them into parallel calendars, comprising the facts Lincoln knew and those known by Booth. These calendars I worked on until I had reduced them to day by day accounts of the activities of the two men.

My next task was to cut out all facts which did not deal with Lincoln's mind during the last months and with Booth's activities.

By this process I brought my notes down to about ten thousand words. From there, I picked the characters with whom Lincoln dealt most intimately and the known conspirators. Those men and women with whose lives I was not already familiar, I studied, and wrote short biographies of each, varying in length from five hundred to five thousand words.

My next task was to try to make these men and women and this cumulative tragedy as real to others as they were to me. I attempted to do this by arranging the facts in the form of a novel. But except for conversations and thought processes I tried not to step outside of fact. I used no fictitious characters. I needed to improvise surprisingly few situations. History itself provided the art and the unalterable movement. I believe that the novel gives a picture more accurate in its effect than many of the so-called histories of Lincoln's last days.

H. W. M.

THE END